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THE RUSSIAN BALLET IN WESTERN EUROPE, 1909–1920

V. Serov.

Serge de Diaghilev.

THE RUSSIAN BALLET

IN WESTERN EUROPE, 1909—1920

By W. A. PROPERT WITH A CHAPTER ON THE MUSIC BY EUGÈNE GOOSSENS AND SIXTY-THREE ILLUSTRATIONS FROM ORIGINAL DRAWINGS

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THE
RUSSIAN BALLET
IN
WESTERN EUROPE
1909-1920
N. Gontcharova.

INTRODUCTION

MUCH has been written and in many languages about the Diaghilev Ballet, and the beauty of its separate achievements has inspired the pens of the best critics in Europe.

The fact that there exists no printed record of its work as a whole is the single and sufficient reason for the publication of this book. This story of what the Ballet has done, and of the chain of happy accidents that led to its birth and even made it possible, has been written as an expression of gratitude by one who has for ten years been a constant watcher and most profound admirer of its work.

It was undertaken with the consent of M. Diaghilev, who only asked that his own name should be mentioned as seldom as possible. That request has been borne in mind, but it was as obviously impossible to adhere to strictly as it would have been to write the History of the Gallic War, and suppress the name of Caesar.

The debt we owe to M. Diaghilev is difficult to over-estimate. What would the historians be saying now of a man who sixty years ago had got Wagner to write for him and induced Manet and his great contemporaries to decorate his operas? The parallel is not unreasonable; for if with the coming of the Ballet we may say that a new colour sense has

swept through the West, so can we say that with the music of Stravinsky, our knowledge of which we owe almost entirely to M. Diaghilev, a new world of sound has opened for us. The former needed only to be seen to be found entirely acceptable ; about the latter controversy still rages. But the end is scarcely to be doubted, and the generation that delights in " Petroushka " will find no insurmountable difficulty in mastering " Le Sacre " and " L'Histoire du Soldat."

Of one thing at least there can be no question, and that is the admiration for M. Diaghilev's genius that is felt by all those great artists who have worked with him. One may go further and say that there are very few musicians or painters in the world who would not willingly put aside whatever they were doing, to work for the Ballet if the chance were offered to them. We can be certain too that of all those who have conducted his orchestras or danced for him there is not one who would not travel cheerfully half over the world if invited to rejoin him.

It is an overwhelming tribute that these great creative and executant artists pay him. But M. Diaghilev being not a little fanatical about " L'Art pour L'Art " and somewhat un-human in his disregard for other people's opinions is certainly unmoved by it and possibly even unaware of it. There is no question of modesty in this attitude of his ; on the contrary he has a serene faith in his own judgment. There is no one more patient than he in listening to would-be counsellors and no one less influenced by their advice should it run counter to his own intuition. Experience has fully justified this detachment, for his intuition has often guided him to success where ordinary reason and prudence certainly appeared to point the opposite way.

INTRODUCTION

The interesting question arises : what part does England play in his thoughts beyond her rôle of providing him with enthusiastic audiences and an occasional dancer or two ? This can only be answered by another question. What have we to offer him at all parallel to the material he has been able to find in Russia or in Spain ? The finest of the ballets have admittedly been those that are based on the records and traditions of some given people ; things like " Petroushka," " Contes Russes," " Good-Humoured Ladies " and " Le Tricorne." Have we anything in our national heritage on which he could draw if he sought for an English equivalent to such ballets as these ?

Let us admit at once that our Folk-tales, dances, and songs, with the possible exception of our sea-chanties, are dull and provincial, when we compare them with those of such countries as Russia and Spain ; though we could imagine even those heavy rhythms and straightforward tunes turned to good account by the alert intelligence of some of our younger composers.

On the other hand, in the higher level of literature we can proudly point to the long sequence of comedies of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries ; in music to the period of those splendid masques, which Inigo Jones delighted to adorn and which in the hands of Purcell rivalled the operas of Pergolesi and his Italian contemporaries ; and in painting to that brief period from Hogarth to Morland and Rowlandson, when the life and character of England was fully and unflinchingly expressed in colour and line, and that, happily, at the time when the idiosyncracy of the Englishman had reached its fullest development and was least tinged by continental influences.

Here surely is stuff that would serve him well ; nor should

we fail him with English artists worthy to rank with his own, and to play the parts that Benois and Picasso, Stravinsky and Tommasini have so admirably performed for him.

"Le Sacre du Printemps" has at last been played in the concert room. The effect of hearing it again after eight years has been to remove all doubts that Stravinsky is far the most vital figure among living musicians. One emerged from that Titanic conflict of sound with one's critical faculties beaten into silence. Of its power there can be no doubt, but it is of a sort to which one submits unconditionally or against which one rebels fiercely. It remains yet for us to judge what additional value the stage setting can give it; but one feels that the music must be so entirely the dominant interest that the only function of the dancing should be to provide an accompaniment of vague forms perpetually moving in answer to its great rhythms, and that it will fail if the choregraphy is too concrete and insistent.

We have seen "Chout" and regretted keenly the absence of Massine's restraining hand, of his constant sense of discipline and definition. The quality of Prokoviev's music happily assures us that the Russian school is not destined to end with Stravinsky.

The "Cuadro Flamenco," out of place though it is in any programme of the Ballet, has brought us yet another of Picasso's settings and has confirmed our high estimate of Massine's dancing in "Le Tricorne."

A word as to the illustrations. Most of them are drawings for the ballets we know so well; others, like Sert's drawings for "Les Jardins d'Aranjuez," and Gontcharova's for "La Liturgie," are for ballets not yet given here; the former must have been

remarkable if only for the size of the hooped skirts, which were so large that they could not pass through the *coulisses* but had to be put on in the wings. "La Liturgie" is obviously a conception of first-rate importance, and its realization is sincerely to be hoped for.

M. Bakst is mainly represented here by drawings of recent years; only two of the plates bear an earlier date than 1914. Since then a new spirit has come over him. His later work shows him becoming more and more disdainful of mere prettiness, and there is a strength and directness and even a tinge of austerity in them that is a sharp contrast to the smooth and sensuous drawings of the "Scheherazade" period.

I owe him my warmest thanks for his permission to reproduce four of his most recent drawings, as I do to M. Sert and M. Matisse for putting their work at my disposal, and to M. Jacques Emile Blanche for the loan of his two portraits: I would also thank M. Massine for lending me three of his Picasso drawings, M. Paul Rosenberg for permission to use four of the plates from his charming portfolio of "Le Tricorne," and M. Svetlov who has allowed me to reproduce certain drawings by Benois and Golovin that appeared in his admirable "Ballet Contemporain" (Paris, 1912). M. Larionov and Madame Gontcharova have given me much assistance, and to the latter I am especially indebted for the frontispiece and the many decorations scattered through the book.

In the matter of orthography I have deliberately departed from strict orthodoxy as enunciated by the School of Russian Studies. The *V* in place of the *W* or the final *ff* will be found throughout. Beyond that consistency has given place to

convenience. *Tchaikovsky* and *Massine* are names known to everyone; re-write them as *Chaikovsky* or *Myassin* and they have the look of strangers. The name *Pushkin* somehow lacks dignity but there is no established alternative and I am assured that it is the only permissible form.

I will end with a quotation from M. J.-E. Blanche (*Revue de Paris*, 1913):

> Les personnes qui vécurent à Saint-Pétérsbourg, les mondains, les diplomates, ont pitié de notre admiration pour cette poignée de créateurs et d'interprétes. "Si vous saviez ce qu'on fait là-bas, si vous étiez allés à l'Opéra, si vous connaissiez les théâtres impériaux et leurs troupes, vous comprendriez qu'on vous trompe; on vous donne, chez vous, ce dont la Russie ne voudrait pas." De même ignorent-ils que nos expositions françaises, organisées par de vrais connaisseurs, et pleines de Degas, de Manet, de Renoir et de Cézanne, représentent, plus que les Salons officiels, la force créatrice des Français.

June 10, 1921.

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THE RUSSIAN BALLET IN WESTERN EUROPE

I

BEFORE THE DAWN

WHILE any great movement is in progress those who witness its beginning are usually so unaware of its importance and so little careful of its records that their successors have difficulty in recovering the details of its early life. It is the object of this book to set down the achievements of the Diaghilev Ballet since it first came into being, and to recall the conditions under which it was born while the impression of its early days is still clear to us. It will fall to a later historian to judge how far the ideals of its founder were realized and how valuable was its influence on the history of the Stage.

That it has the right to be considered among the great movements in Art is indisputable. Its history is bound up with that of the modern development of painting and music, and its leader must be recognized as having brought into existence a new form of æsthetic expression in which three of the oldest and greatest of the world's Arts can play their separate and equal parts.

The long list of his chosen painters and musicians bears witness to the seriousness of his aims and the catholicity of his taste. That the company still exists after twelve years is a proof of its vitality; that it is still without a rival is convincing evidence of its distinction.

It was fortunate in the hour of its birth. It came at a moment when fine dancing was almost non-existent in Western Europe. Such as there was existed in two forms. There was the Opera House ballet with capable dancers spinning like tops, coryphées in shining rows, and scores of strong young legs in pink tights doing the same things in the same little gauze skirts, and smiling the same smile whether they were the witches in Faust or the sirens of the Venusberg.

Or there were the intellectual amateurs, the solitary dancers, guiltless of tights or technique, who trailed their yards of black tulle through the Death of Asa, or skipped like young lambs to the strains of Mendelssohn's Spring Song.

The one was the painted ghost of a once living Art, in which, among the general wreckage, some of the old glamour still survived ; the other was the craze of a day, entirely artless in both senses of that two-edged word.

There was a school, also, of young women who called themselves dancers, who stood on glass plates in a darkened stage, while the lime-light man underneath played tricks with coloured lights. This had beauty, too, of a sort, for the light made strange effects with the whirling draperies, but it was emphatically not dancing.

So wearisome was the ballet, as we knew it then, that the world had begun to condemn all dancing that was done on the points of the toes, and to declare that, with the tarlatan skirts and the pink tights, it should no longer be tolerated.

They had not realized that the school of the chiton and the naked feet would in its turn prove even more wearisome

than the ballet. And the mere fact that it could be acquired without any great technical training precluded any possibility of its being ranked as an Art.

If the dancing was in a sad plight, how much more so was the mise-en-scène. Here was no ghostly beauty left from early days. Nothing but a false calico realism, ill-drawn stuff done over with worse colour, and dresses that harmonized neither with each other nor the scenery.

And the worst of it was that we were completely satisfied with things as they were, and honestly admired these masterpieces of false realism and expensive millinery.

The year 1908 witnessed the first invasion of Western Europe by the Russians, and their prompt capture of Paris. London, unaware of their existence, was at that time agitated by the rival claims of Miss Isadora Duncan, who interpreted Gluck, and Miss Maud Allan, who introduced the long-suffering Salome to the music-hall stage. The second lady was adjudged the victor and Miss Duncan, far the better dancer of the two, left England for ever.

It was in 1909 that we saw the forerunners of the Diaghilev Ballet.

In the Coliseum programme as announced in the "Times" of June 28, we read the laconic entry, "Russian Dancers, 9.30." It meant nothing to us. We had heard no word of that wonderful company that had just roused Paris to such enthusiasm. I can find no comment in the "Times" on their dancing. It was merely a music-hall turn, though the name of one of the dancers was Thamar Karsavina.

Such of us as do not remember that brief season can only

realize its success by the fact that the spring of the following year, 1910, saw the cult of Russian dancing become general, and no music-hall programme considered complete without its representative pair or little company. There was more exciting news in the "Times" of May 17, "The whole of the ballet of the Royal Theatres of St. Petersburg and Moscow will arrive in London within the next few days and 300 dancers, including Mme. Preobrajenskaia, will appear here early next month." But by the time they had actually arrived at the Hippodrome, to dance in the "Lac des Cygnes," their numbers had dwindled to twenty.

In April Mme. Pavlova appeared at the Palace with Michael Mordkin, the "Times" critic politely referring to them as "This talented lady and gentleman."

In May Bolm was dancing with Kyasht at the Empire, while Karsavina was back at the Coliseum with Baldina and Koslov, dancing in "Giselle."

Finally, in June 1911, Diaghilev brought his whole Company over to Covent Garden, and London had its first experience of what a stage setting could and should be.

It may, not unreasonably, be objected that in the following pages, more consideration has been given to the décor of the ballets than to the dancing. But the reason for this unequal treatment is that while Diaghilev completely and at once revolutionized the whole mise-en-scène, he, at first, at any rate, only restored the traditional dancing of the great past: and a revolution is always more important than a restoration.

As the dancing develops in the hands of the successive maîtres-de-ballet, as the movements become more strictly

attuned to the rhythm of the music, and gestural dancing replaces the static miming, we gradually find ourselves confronted with a new ballet. But what Diaghilev first showed us was essentially the old ballet wonderfully danced, and only really differing from its classical forbears in the quality of its music and its decoration.

II

THE COMING OF DIAGHILEV

BEFORE the coming of Diaghilev, the décor of a new production was treated as a matter of secondary importance and was left to the taste of the scene-painter and the dressmaker. But Diaghilev had come to us straight from the one country in modern Europe that, like ancient Greece, looks on the theatre as an important factor in the spiritual life of a nation, and he had quite other views on the subject.

He formulated the theory that a theatrical production could only claim recognition as a work of serious art if it were the result of the association, on equal terms, of the arts of literature, music and painting. As he conceded to the painter an equality of control, so he postulated in him a parallel mastery of his art. This theory, put into practice by him, has been the means of giving to the world a remarkable series of stage pictures, a series which is certainly without equal in the annals of the theatre.

Considering that the greater part of the music had been chosen from the world's acknowledged masterpieces, while the painters were pioneers in an untrodden field of applied art, it is remarkable that so great a measure of success should have been achieved in such a daring experiment; and it only succeeded because the painters were men of high ability and were working for a man whose knowledge of painting is as thorough as his

knowledge of music. But, able men as they were, it is safe to say that, of the Russians among them, barely a single one had been heard of in England before their names appeared on the programmes. Nor is this surprising when we remember that Russian artists hardly ever exhibited their pictures outside their own country, that there were none to be seen in the public galleries of Western Europe, and that the school was never mentioned in any of the text books.

The story of Russian painting since the accession of Peter the Great is one of systematic neglect, that persisted until only a few years ago. The new Empire of the East was, in the eighteenth century, obsessed with a mania for Westernism. She mistrusted her own splendid but unconventional past, and submissively and gratefully accepted the Western professors of arts and manners who condescended to visit her. Italy supplied her with architects and musicians, and Germany and France with writers and painters. Their rulers from Peter to Paul, unlike their contemporaries on the French throne, did nothing for native art, and though their successors of the nineteenth century were more enlightened men, their lukewarm patronage was only important in so far as it proved that the era of official hostility to the art of their own country was at an end.

But in the heart of the Empire the true spirit of Russia was beginning to make itself felt. The glorious outburst of literature and music that dates with the coming of Pushkin, Gogol and Lermontov, of Glinka and Balakirev, was only made possible by the enthusiasm of Moscow, and in face of the indifference of all that St. Petersburg stood for. As late as 1863 we can find Aksakov writing to Dostoievsky that the first

duty of those who would free the captive spirit of the nation was to detest St. Petersburg with all their heart and soul; and it is to the proud nationalism of Moscow that we owe the Renaissance of Russian Art.

At first, strangely enough, while just homage was being paid to their great writers and musicians, their painting remained neglected and unknown.

Yet this was the oldest and most famous of their arts, with an unbroken record of splendid achievements that went back to the fourteenth century. The Kremlin was there to prove it, and the churches and monasteries at Kiev, Pskov and Novgorod. It was an art that never wearied, and the high painted walls of the cathedrals of Yaroslav, Rostov and Vladimir could tell of its sustained power right through the seventeenth century.

And not only in the churches, but also in countless houses through the land could be found those marvellous ikons that glow like jewels or are delicately pale like stained ivory. Even through the dark period of the eighteenth century that art had kept alive, and side by side with the painters of ikons had arisen a little school of portrait and landscape painters whose pictures, grave and scholarly, could more than hold their own beside the shallower, showier work of the official foreign painters of the court.

It was not to be wondered at that so little was known of this glorious inheritance. Through the great stretches of the Empire there were few facilities for travel, and her painted monuments were scattered over the length and breadth of the land.

THE COMING OF DIAGHILEV

A vast amount of work was needed for the searching out, over so large an area, of the treasures that were stored in the cathedrals and monasteries, and of the pictures which hung forgotten in the great country houses; and, above all, a man was needed who knew how to deal with the material that had accumulated, and how best to give it to the world. An ideal leader for this new crusade was forthcoming in the person of Serge de Diaghilev, a young man of fine taste, an enthusiastic student of painting and music and, a point that was all-important in that caste-ridden country, the possessor of considerable social influence.

He threw himself into the work with characteristic energy. He collected a little band of fellow enthusiasts, enlisted the financial aid of a few rich amateurs, and launched that wonderful magazine of his, "Mir Iskusstvo" (that is, "The World of Art"), every number of which cost them (incidentally) about six times the price at which it was sold. During the five years of its life (1899–1904) it continued its missionary work, and ranged over the whole field of Russian art from the Scythian treasure of the Crimea to the painters of the Catherine era and the early nineteenth century. The success of this movement was emphatic, and Russia began at last to realize the unexpected wealth of her re-discovered patrimony.

Nor did Diaghilev neglect the living painters; he recognized their great abilities, but he saw the danger that lay before them if they remained isolated from the outer world. So he organized a series of annual exhibitions, in which his countrymen found themselves for the first time side by side with the representative painters of other countries.

The success of these exhibitions, and the admirable quality of much of the work shown there, convinced him that the time had come for his countrymen to challenge the verdict of the Western world in the supreme court of Paris.

But the exhibition that he held there in 1906 of Russian painting and sculpture had only a moderate success, and even that was in great measure political. It would have had more success here possibly, had he been able to send it over the Channel, for the Russian painters are, and have been for the last century, more akin to ours than to the French in their methods and ideals.

Diaghilev was in no way dismayed by the comparative failure of the exhibition. Paris had approved of the Russian music, and he was determined that they should equally admire his beloved painters. So he changed the method of his attack and, indefatigable as ever, began to organize that company which, through the association of the already accepted composers with the hitherto rejected painters, was destined to take the world by storm.

In Russia alone, among the countries of the world, it was reckoned a great honour for a painter to have the mounting of a play, an opera or a ballet entrusted to him. In England and in France painters did not concern themselves with such things. One can recollect the chorus of gratitude that was called forth when that great master, Sir Alma Tadema, condescended to honour the stage by superintending the mise-en-scène of some Shakespearian revival of Sir Henry Irving's or Sir Herbert Tree's—I forget which—but the result was of no account and the attempt was not repeated.

THE COMING OF DIAGHILEV

We can understand the extraordinary emotion of the Parisians, accustomed as they were to the ponderous banality of their own productions, when in 1908 Diaghilev first produced "Boris Godounov" at their Opera. The effect of the stern simplicity of Pushkin's play, the virility and the dramatic intensity of Moussorgsky's music, the poetry of Golovin's setting, must have been overwhelming. Never since Tamagno's great days had they heard singing to compare with Chaliapin's, never before could they have heard such a chorus; nor ever imagined such a setting.

It had come comparatively unheralded—it had conquered instantly. The great treasure-house of Russian art had been opened wide that day, and though war and revolution have made exploration difficult, yet every succeeding year has brought us something new and wonderful from that apparently inexhaustible store.

Golovin's share in the triumph of that night was instantly recognized. The art of painting had justified its admission into the hierarchy of the theatre, and the truth of Diaghilev's theory could no more be questioned. The fear that any further elaboration in the mounting of an opera was bound to distract the attention of the audience from the music was finally shown to be groundless; at all events when, as in this case, the painter was in absolute sympathy with the composer, and the one art but the necessary complement and fulfilment of the other.

The picture and the frame must be worthy the one of the other. It is only the incongruous that distracts; a serious setting would be a source of danger to a bad opera, and such a

thing as "Aida" is perfectly mated with the Covent-Garden Egypt of its background. But the full beauty of "Tristan" will never be revealed while it suffers the disfigurement of its invariably detestable mise-en-scène.

The action of "Boris" had bound the painter, for the most part, to the realities of the Kremlin. He had got at the heart of them, and by the power of his brush he had brought the audience face to face with all the beauty and the terror of that amazing place. Perhaps the finest moments were the coronation and the last scene of all. In the former the white austerity of the great cathedral was as perfect a frame for the concentrated colour of the massed citizens as was the shimmer of the golden roof and painted walls of the death-chamber for the black procession of the priests and nuns.

Golovin is one of the most interesting and many-sided painters in Russia. While his portraits are alive, brilliant and quite straightforward, it is in his landscapes that the poet and the dreamer in him are manifested. They breathe of the subtleties of tangled foliage and interlacing boughs, and are quite extraordinarily intricate in pattern and restrained in colour.

Very typical of his work is that mysterious garden one knows so well in the "Oiseau de Feu," that haunting vision of flowers, trees and palaces, where nothing seems tangible but the great gates that shut it off from the world of reality. The Firebird is, alas! the only ballet he has given us, and indeed the only work of his that has been seen in England, the "Boris" of 1913 being by another hand. It was produced two years later than the opera, and is a happy illustration of how a painter

and a musician can work together in absolute sympathy. Never surely was music more accurately visualized than when Golovin undertook the scenery for Stravinsky's ballet.

He shares with Glinka and Rimsky-Korsakov their love of Spain, and some of his best work has been done in his settings for "Carmen," "Don Quichotte" and the ballet written round Glinka's "Jota Aragonese." He is a painter of infinite variety, and whether the scene be a Spanish seaport or the Norwegian home of an Ibsen play, or a legendary isle of some folk-tale like Tsar Saltan, his innate poetry and the rhythm of his colour give one a swift convincing sense of work supremely well done.

III

LÉON BAKST

IN 1909 Diaghilev, returning to Paris with ballet as well as opera, brought forward three new painters—Alexandre Benois, Korovin, the official painter of the Marie Theatre, and Léon Bakst, whose name was destined to eclipse the others, and whose work came to be regarded as an essential ingredient in the Russian Ballet, and in a sense the hall-mark of its authenticity. Certainly from 1910 to 1914 the most important of the new productions originated with him, so much so, that the public, always shy of new men, almost resented the announcement of any other name. It was a pity in some ways, and for once showed us a Diaghilev bowing to popular taste and not leading it. We could well have spared two or three of the Bakst productions if we could have had more of Benois and much more of Golovin. But the best of Bakst was a very delightful thing, and "Scheherazade" and "Thamar" were of his very best.

Two untranslatable French words give us the keynote of his work—*volupté* and *luxe* are written all over them. Was there ever seen such a riot of colour as in "Scheherazade," such mountains of cushions, such enormous golden lamps and such a breaking of the Ten Commandments? Time moves quickly, but in 1911, if Londoners found it exhilarating, they also, undoubtedly, found it shocking. We have, since then,

grown used to an even more generous display of unclothed humanity on our own stage, and the love affairs of painted Orientals no longer shock us.

But, leaving aside the moralities, it was a revelation to us then of the possibility of assembling and interweaving a multitude of sharply contrasted colours and creating therefrom a harmonious whole. It was a perfect tornado of colour—scarlet, orange, purple, rose and blue, made more vivid by the brown and gold and silver of the slaves, and set against a background of green curtains. We suspect the historical truth of it, but we agree that only in such a setting could so lurid an episode have been enacted.

The first performance of "Scheherazade" in England was an important event, for two reasons. We saw the ballet for the first time breaking away from all traditions and expressing itself firmly and fully in a language entirely of its own invention, and, to make the night doubly memorable, there came our first knowledge of Rimsky-Korsakov, the greatest figure in musical history since the death of Richard Wagner. Unknown to us though he was before that day, he was, within the next three years, to take his secure place high among the immortals of music, through that great succession of masterpieces which began with "Scheherazade," and culminated in the last and most enchanting of all, the "Coq D'Or."

In the second of the more important early works of Bakst, "Cleopatra" (1910), we have a more delicate colour-scheme—a temple of pure rose and gold and a strip of green Nile seen between the columns. It is chiefly memorable for the strange beauty of the Queen's entry—the gold and ebony chest from

which the mummy form was carried, and the gradual unshrouding from the series of great veils in which she had been wrapped. It was so impressive a ceremony that it gave one a feeling that it was authentic, so impressive, indeed, that the subsequent events came as an anti-climax.

There was nothing very remarkable in the dresses; the simplest, the white linen of the slaves and the stencilled draperies of the Greek maidens, were the best. But the whole thing, down to its smallest details, had so obviously been the result of a long and loving study on the part of the artist, that one forgave its two cardinal faults: first, that Arensky's music was consistently second-rate, and second, that the main theme of the ballet being undanceable, all the dancing was merely *divertissement*, and meaningless.

More remarkable than the dancing were the movements of Cleopatra and her attendants, the hieratic profiles of Egyptian painting being reproduced with wonderful fidelity and very striking effect. Alas, it proved only too easy to imitate, and thereafter no Oriental play of any date or country was complete without its caricature of the Cleopatra procession.

In 1918 a new scene was painted for this ballet by Robert Delaunay. It was hot in colour, over heavy in architecture. Had the whole ballet been re-dressed in the same key it might have been imposing enough, but as it was, only the Queen survived the change, in her dazzling new dress and her four marvellous new veils. Her brilliance was undeniable, but the rest were blotted out by the ferocious background.

With "Thamar" (1912) came our introduction to another of the giants of Russian music—Ivan Balakirev, whose

wonderful " Islamey " was already known to our more ambitious pianists as one of the ultimate tests of their endurance and technical power.

Bakst, doubtless inspired by the greatness of the music, reached in " Thamar " a higher level than he had done in " Cleopatra." Line and colour had both been used with more restraint and finer imagination. The sheer height of the walls echoed the relentless cruelty of the crowd that filled the room, and the great black cloaks of the stranger and of the Queen's servants, among the reds and blues of the women, startled one to a sense of the impending tragedy.

" Thamar " was the third and, so far, the last of the erotic ballets, and dealt again with the love-storms of Eastern queens and their slaughtered lovers. It was the most lurid of the three, and the scenario was of Bakst's own concocting. Our moralists began to assure us that the Russian Ballet was a degenerate affair and Bakst clearly an erotomaniac.

" Carnaval " (1910) was in sharp contrast to the sensuous Orientalism of this famous, notorious trio—a wind-flower among the orchids. Designed originally for the Marie Theatre in 1906, it was a simple delicate fantasy of the 1830 period, played before a plain blue curtain. It was as nearly perfect as such a thing could be. It still retains its compelling charm, though Nijinsky, Bolm and the little striped sofas have all gone.

The " Spectre de la Rose " (1910) calls for little comment. It was a languishing, sentimental little ballet that became enormously popular by reason of Nijinsky's flying leap through the window. The setting obviously drew its inspiration from Munich.

Bakst's next ballet was "Narcisse" (1911), the first of his three Greek ventures. The music by Tcherepnin was suitably neurotic but otherwise undistinguished. The scene, a clearing in a forest, tenanted at first only by green wood-sprites ; odd, shy creatures that fled at the first sound of approaching man. Entered a troop of youths and maidens wearing admirable clothes but a little depressed. After some apparently religious meanderings and intervals of Bacchic liveliness, appeared Narcissus, a strange androgynous figure, whose hair and clothes indicated the vagueness of his sex. His presence added no gaiety to the party, nor did that of Echo, who trailed about rather miserably in the background. So it dragged along till at last Narcissus disappeared into the brook, somewhat to our relief. Up on the instant rose a six-foot daffodil ; back crept the green sprites to gaze at so fine a flower, and it was over.

On the whole a tiresome ballet, but charming in colour and a most refreshing and intelligent variation on the Greek theme of dress. The decorating of white linen draperies with stencilled patterns that had been tentatively used in "Cleopatra" was here carried further. Bakst had abandoned the universal orthodox white, and colour was as freely used in the ground work as in the patterned ornaments of the clothes. The monotony of the classical ballet was thereby dispelled without any sacrifice of correctness.

The scene for "Narcisse" was his first exercise in imaginative landscape, and showed him to be a really able tree-draughtsman with that fondness for heavy plume-like foliage that we were to see again in "Jeux" and "L'Après-Midi." Narcissus himself was the only failure, his tunic was too short

and his hair was too long ; his legs were emphatically the legs of a man and the rest of him was a gawky girl.

Still the ballet achieved a greater success with the public than its successor of 1912, " Daphnis and Chloe," to my mind far the more interesting of the two. The music was unquestionably finer, the scenario of more sustained interest, and Bakst's scenery and dresses showed a distinct advance on his work of the previous year. For some reason it has disappeared since 1914, in spite of the enormously increased number of people who delight in Ravel's music. Its reproduction has been promised, but so far without fulfilment.

In the same year (1912) came " L'Après-Midi d'un Faune," Nijinsky's masterpiece and, perhaps, in a way, Bakst's. The period chosen was that of the Chorœ of the Acropolis. The formal hair, braided in plaits, and the long, severe draperies accorded well with the rigid poses and angular movements of the dancers. The Faun was nude, with gilded hair and horns, and his body curiously marked with purple. Only the scenery was wrong ; with all the archaic feeling in the figures, one wanted something more formal, less naturalistic than the rich Southern landscape that Bakst had provided. It was a thing of intense beauty and the joy of two seasons, but it passed, presumably for ever, with the passing of Nijinsky.

" Papillons," in 1913, turned out to be an elaborated " Carnaval," very pleasant, but with nothing new to say.

" Le Dieu Bleu " was frankly a failure. It appeared in 1912, and after a few performances disappeared for good and all. The plot was uninteresting and the music no better. It had been specially written by Reynaldo Hahn, the first composer

chosen by Diaghilev for such an honour outside the ranks of his own countrymen, an inexplicable choice on any ground, and the only serious lapse in Diaghilev's musical judgment that one can recall. The scenery, an orange-yellow hillside, carved with grotesque deities and snakes, and the Indian dresses, were worthy of a better fate. Bakst was working very well at this period, and his drawings for the "Dieu Bleu" are among the best he ever did; clean in design, brilliant in colour, full of invention, and free from his sometimes tiresome physical exaggerations.

It is an unhappy fate for such good work, and it is a fate that unfortunately has too often befallen his best things. One recollects that brilliant affair of "St. Sebastian," for which D'Annunzio, Debussy and he gave of their best, and the whole a plaything for a capricious actress who wearied of it after eight or ten performances and threw it contemptuously aside. This treatment she repeated with three other productions which Bakst had decorated for her, and for which three admirable composers, De Severac, Glazounov and Pizzetti had written the music, namely, Verhaeren's "Hélène de Sparte," Wilde's "Salome," and "La Pisanella" of D'Annunzio. Four or five years later Fate was again unkind, and an elaborate version of "Aladdin," for which he had worked hard, never appeared at all, owing to the failure of the theatre syndicate that ordered it.

For Debussy's "Jeux," in 1913, Bakst had only the scene to provide, a heavily treed château garden, the dresses being only simple white tennis clothes. One can but hope that some day a new scenario will be written round that delicious music of Debussy's, something less ugly and sterile than the series of

meaningless movements that we saw, and rightly and instantly condemned.

"Joseph," in 1914, was in every way too monumental. As a spectacle it was magnificent, but its very magnificence was its undoing. Music, scenery and dresses all showed the same over-elaboration, and by now one only remembers it as an amazing reconstruction of a Paolo Veronese parade picture. Not a note of the music survives, and of all the dancing that there must have been, only the dim figure of a forlorn boy in a ragged sheepskin, very young, very pathetic.

The ballet was never to be seen again, but the boy returned to us four years later, the master dancer and audacious innovator whose genius had won for him the undisputed succession to Fokine and Nijinsky.

In any adverse criticism of "Joseph" as a whole, it is only fair to Bakst, as well as to Sert, the inventor of that colossal scene, to say that their parts in the production deserve great praise. Bakst worked along the line of Venetian fashions of the Middle Sixteenth Century, and the dresses showed to the full his inventive ingenuity and the peculiar personal flavour that he always manages to give, whatever period he is working in.

Three years later Bakst had finished another ballet, and "Les Femmes de Bonne Humeur" was given in Paris in 1917. Goldoni, Scarlatti and Longhi are the sources from whence it was taken; the scene is a Venetian Piazza, and the action represents a complicated intrigue carried through at express speed, a laughing, rippling affair of masks and disguises in which the spirit of the early eighteenth century is very ingeniously brought

back to life by the three interpreters of the early twentieth century—Massine, Tommasini and Bakst.

There is a little too much movement in it—everyone is so frightfully alive. Even when they are not themselves dancing they must beat time with their hands and feet, and at last their restlessness spreads from the stage to the audience, and one is almost glad when it is all over.

Bakst's share in it was a little disappointing. A tiresome piece of bad perspective in the window and the balcony spoilt an otherwise charming scene, and the quality of his eighteenth-century dresses was no match for the porcelain perfection of Scarlatti's music. But these faults of detail are really of little importance to set against so much that was excellent, and the ballet as a whole takes high rank among their many fine things, and we are unlikely to forget the stately fooling of that monumental Countess or the admirable figures of the beggar and the white-masked fiddlers.

And so we come to the end of a perhaps over-long account of Bakst's work, and can sum him up as he shows himself in his work and in his drawings. A figure-draughtsman of first-rate ability, a landscape-painter very sensitive to the lines of hills and the building of trees, a colourist without fear and a remarkable manipulator of water-colour, his predilections have been for the exuberant and the sumptuous, and the proof of his excellence can be measured by the failure of his numerous copyists.

He has founded a school, but he is likely to be its only master, and his followers will probably be of little account. He himself would prefer to go down to posterity as the austere painter of "Terror Antiquus" (a problem picture of heroic

size), than as the designer of world-famous but flamboyant ballets.

But whatever the final verdict on his merits as an artist may be, there can be no doubt that his is the most outstanding figure among the painters who worked with Diaghilev during the first five years of his enterprise. No one, himself assuredly included, would wish to claim for him the designation of a great painter. But within the walls of the theatre, the terrain which he had deliberately chosen for his work, he remains in many ways unrivalled.

Spirituality and subtlety are not among his many gifts, but the combination of profuse imagination and technical mastery of line and colour is a sufficiently rare endowment to ensure for its possessor a position of some importance in the chronicle of contemporary art. However the future may judge him, if indeed his art survives at all, we of the present generation, at all events, owe him a great deal, not only for the pleasant hours he has given us in these past ten years, but also for the endless opportunities his work affords of discussing the interaction of Art and Morals—a subject of perennial interest in Britain.

IV

BENOIS, ROERICH AND OTHER RUSSIANS

DIAGHILEV has not so far ventured on any ballet of contemporary life in Western Europe. To attempt it would necessarily involve some trafficking with Fashion, a thing to be avoided at all costs if a décor is to possess any permanent value. For the Fashion of to-day will be intolerable to-morrow, and a ballet of 1920 whose characters were of such rank in life as to be affected by it, would need wholly remounting each successive year, or it would be killed by its dowdiness.

So we find that the subjects of the ballets are invariably concerned with periods or countries where, from the sequence of successive phases of fashion, a clear fixed historic style has emerged.

This fact has thrown the painters back on to the difficult problem of "period reconstruction," a problem which must be solved by using one or other of three methods—the intellectual, the commercial, or the psychological.

The first involves much searching through dictionaries and many visits to museums, note-book and foot-rule in hand: and only too often the result is a mere exercise in Archæology, praiseworthy but lifeless.

The second entails less fatigue. You can sit at home with a fashion-paper and a copy of Racinet's "Costume Historique"

and make a judicious blend of the two. If, as a result, you find your stage looking like a fancy-dress ball, it will not greatly matter—for such things are popular in these days.

The third, the Diaghilev method, postulates a special mentality in the painter. He must be able to detach himself from the present and absorb himself in the past to such a point that he re-lives in it and works, for the time, as if he belonged to it. The result is something living and authentic, and as convincing as a contemporary record.

Such a man is Alexandre Benois, and of such a quality are his pictures, his book-illustrations and his stage-settings. He has re-lived successively under Peter, Elizabeth, Catherine and Nicholas. He has dwelt at Versailles in the days of Louis XIV, and in China under the Kien-Lung Dynasty, and through all these adventures he has retained his own personality, unchanged and unspoilt, his learning, his humour and his boyish enthusiasm.

His illustrations of Pushkin and Krilov are beloved in Russia, his pictures are to be found in all their galleries, and his history of Russian painting is the only classic of its kind, but over here he is only known through the two ballets, "Le Pavillon d'Armide" and "Petroushka," and his setting for Stravinsky's Opera "Le Chant du Rossignol."

The "Pavillon d'Armide" was the first in order of the Diaghilev ballets, and was produced in Paris in 1909. It was the last of the ballets of the old Petipa school, with its *ensembles*, *pas d'action*, *ballabile* and the rest of the traditional sequence, and with the exception of occasional performances of "Giselle" and the "Lac des Cygnes" given to exhibit the

prowess of a Kchessinskaia or a Pavlova, the only example of its type that they have given us. Still with all its inconsequence and its inequalities it was immeasurably better than anything of the kind we had seen before. It had much beauty of colour and design, and it had all the artificial romance of its date and all its rococo stylishness.

"Sylphides" (1910) may be taken as a pious and beautiful tribute, dedicated to the memory of the old ballet, and of Petipa, its last exponent, by Fokine, the inventor of the new. It was cast in the pure Taglioni form. It had no story, there was the moon and there were the Sylphs in the meadow, and they just danced for joy at the beauty of the night. But behind all its artlessness lay such knowledge, such calculated harmony of line and movement, that the honoured ghosts lived again and had become immortal.

By 1911 the inequalities we had seen in the "Pavillon" had vanished, and in all that crowd that throngs the stage in "Petroushka" there is not a single detail that one would alter. The great scene represents a *Fête Foraine* in the Admiralty Square, in the time of Nicholas I. The Russia of that moment lives again in every sound and movement, the people in their gay holiday gowns are insistently alive, in their laughter and their tears, as the scene changes from comedy to high tragedy, and the whole thing is an example of period reconstruction at its very best. But it was more than that. It showed us a Benois freed from all academic fetters leaping forward with the youngest of the moderns. Specially was this noticeable in the cells of the Moor and Petroushka, where the fruit, flowers and animals in the one, and the sinister portrait of the Magician in

the other, are as vivid and convincing as anything ever done by his successors of the newer school. It was the first victory of the creative over the imitative, of true decoration over naturalism, and it indicated the lines on which all work of pure fantasy should be treated for the stage.

After this advance Benois appeared to have fallen back in the "Chant du Rossignol" (1914). Here, just when the character of the music permitted, or even actually demanded, the utmost freedom of personal expression in the decoration, the artist seems to have lacked courage; and the chinoiserie of the mise-en-scène in consequence seems all the more conventional and expressionless. It might have shone as a setting for Tchaikovsky—but Stravinsky, the law-breaker, killed it. It had its beauties, great beauties even. In the first act he managed to hold his own with the musician, who was in his gentlest mood, and the third act had some of the directness and simplicity that the music demanded. But the second, the important act was mere bric-à-brac.

No, the name of Benois stands for "Petroushka," and not much else, for such of us as do not know him through his books and his pictures.

Valentin Serov, whose portrait of Diaghilev we have been permitted to reproduce, is only represented, so far as any work for the Ballet is concerned, by the delightful curtain that we used to watch during the overture to "Scheherazade," a daring attempt to convey the spirit of a Persian miniature to a canvas big enough to veil the stage of the Paris Opera House. To our great regret, since the season of 1913 we have seen it no more, but it is still in existence in the stores of the Opera; and it may

be that the next time the Ballet comes to London we shall be permitted once more to see the great landscape of brown rocks and blue sea and that rose-red castle where the little ladies wave their farewells to the glittering train of huntsmen. His audacious nude portrait of Ida Rubenstein is well known, and his many drawings of Chaliapin and Anna Pavlova take their places in that astonishing gallery of famous Russians that he has created.

Serov, who died in 1911, holds as important a position in Russian contemporary art as Sargent does in England. A comparison of their work shows that they have much in common in their fine draughtsmanship and the wide range of their powers.

Nicholas Roerich was the man chosen to decorate Borodin's opera of "Prince Igor," and the choice was singularly happy. To him, with Ivan Bilibin, we owe that series of pictures and drawings on which we found so much of our knowledge of mediæval Russia. While Grabar's monumental history supplies the documentary record of Russian architecture, Bilibin and Roerich are the artist historians of their country's past. Bilibin's most important work has been done among those incredibly daring wooden churches of the Perm and Archangel Governments. Roerich appears to have been equally attracted by the barbaric paganism of prehistoric Russia and the mediæval splendour of later times. So he was as well equipped for the "Sacre du Printemps" as he was for the rainbow glitter of life in Yaroslav in the first act of "Prince Igor." The opening act of this opera was perhaps as impressive as anything the Russians have given us, while the Polovtsi dances remain a perpetual delight that familiarity has only increased, twenty

great minutes of movement and colour. His setting for "Ivan the Terrible" attained the same high level of scholarly accomplishment that we might have expected from the painter of Prince Igor, and though none of the scenes approached in beauty and unity of design the greatness of the Polovtsi Camp, yet one remembers with much pleasure the entry into Pskov, and Ivan's scarlet tent in the last act with the dim light of its great candles and the blinding gash of blue moonlight at its door.

The "Sacre du Printemps" (1913) was an unlucky business. It was a headlong leap into the music of wilful, intentional, purposeful dissonance, and a breaking away from traditional dancing every bit as revolutionary. The world was baffled by it, but the active hostility of the French was at least more intelligent than the polite indifference of the English audiences. Its difficulties from the point of view of the spectator were undoubtedly very great, but was there ever anything new and strange presented to our intelligence that did not demand time and experience for their comprehension? And I, for one, am sure that in the case of a musician so sincere and so able as Stravinsky his score would have yielded up its secrets and its power and beauty would have revealed themselves could we but have had time to absorb it. Roerich's scenery was pale in colour, his dresses of primary green and red and in complete accord with the chilly atmosphere and crude violence of the action—it was learned, impressive and personal, another example of the archæological spirit that informs without intruding. The only other work of Roerich that concerns us is the curtain or *Panneau Décoratif* that he made in 1910 to be used during the playing by the orchestra of Rimsky-Korsakov's "Battle of

Kerjanetz." It was the only one of that series of painted curtains that had no connection with a succeeding ballet, but it has lately been commandeered, by a happy inspiration, for service during the playing of the march from "Prince Igor" that precedes the ballet of that name. It is a great green and scarlet panel, an Uccello translated by a Slav, horsemen, bowmen, banners and shields among green hillocks and pools stained red under a red sky. Altogether a typical example of the artist at his best. If his pictures disappoint us somewhat by their invariable flat decorative treatment, if he remains too constantly the scene-painter, yet the interest and variety of his subjects and the sincerity and enthusiasm with which he approaches them cannot but move us to an echoing pleasure in the results.

What is to be said of Doboujinsky? His "Midas" showed him as uninspired by the classics as his pictures of 1840 Russia show him to be an admirable painter of subjects that interest him. Steinberg's music was so pedestrian that it would have killed any scenario or setting, however good. He is a far better artist than either this or his scene for "Papillons" would indicate; and the fact that he is the constant adviser and frequently the active executant in the décor of the plays given at the Moscow Art Theatre, proves the high opinion of his powers that prevails in his own country. Soudeikin, on the other hand, had in "Salome" a subject that should have served well his bent for things exotic and fantastic, but unfortunately this side of his nature is more than balanced by a certain lack of fine taste and discrimination, and his pictures are apt to strike one as freakish and unconvincing.

Still, restrained as he had been in this instance by the better judgment of Diaghilev, he had done his work well, and had either the music or the dancing been a shade better the whole thing might have achieved success. As it is, it suffered the same fate as "Dieu Bleu" and "Midas," and was seen no more.

Anisfeld is represented by the Sadko ballet, one of the most poignant disappointments of the whole series. It is taken from an opera in which Russian legend is at its most capricious, in which, as in "Tsar Saltan," the whole train of the marvels of earth, air and sea are displayed, and for which Rimsky-Korsakov had poured out a rushing triumphant river of music. It shows us the coming of Sadko to the palace of the Sea King, and the feasting for his marriage with the mermaid princess. It is difficult to imagine a more promising subject to work on. Produced first in Paris in 1911, we had to wait for it till 1918, and then had to confess that no one had risen to the occasion. The music was badly played, Fokine's choregraphy uninspired, and Anisfeld's décor was very inferior to anything one would have expected from the inventor of the terrific purple and gold "Islamey" of the Marie Theatre. Even Gontcharova's new dresses for the principal characters did nothing to redeem it, they but emphasized the dullness of the rest. I do not know that I am being quite fair to Anisfeld; the production was several years old, and had voyaged many tens of thousands of miles, while the rest of the repertory was more or less new. So no wonder it looked tired. I am not in Diaghilev's confidence on that point, but I imagine that the high standard of technical and

material perfection that he has set himself must necessarily impose an alarmingly high expenditure for maintaining it. We may say that in times of war and stress such expenditure is neither possible or justifiable, and that it matters little in the case of old favourites, whom we have grown to love in more prosperous days, if they come back to us a little travel-stained and shabby. But it is manifestly unwise to present to us for the first time a spectacle that has lost all the freshness of its mise-en-scène, and to expect us to admire it for what it may once have been.

Before we leave the Russian painters we must refer to the other Russian operas that were given during the famous seasons of 1913 and 1914. When "Boris Godounov" reached England the Golovin setting that had astonished Paris in 1908 had given place to an almost equally interesting one, inspired for the most part by its predecessor by Juon, a painter with whose pictures everyone who has visited Russia is familiar. He has painted much and lovingly in and about the Troitsky Monastery by Moscow, that little holy city where the walls are blood-red and the domes are gay with blue and green and gold. So the Squares and Cathedrals and the vaulted rooms of the Kremlin, ablaze with gold and the painted glory of saints, were material entirely after his own heart. We saw again, as we had in the third scene of Roerich's "Ivan the Terrible," what a wonderful effect can be got from a white wall under a blue sky, and we saw again the problem of a low-vaulted ceiling successfully grappled with.

In "Khovantchina" we meet yet another painter, Ivan Federovsky, an artist with whose work outside the theatre

I am unacquainted. He proved himself worthy of his fellows in his scene of the city square with the great wooden houses looming black against the dawn, and the scarlet soldiers crouching round the gate. His dressing of the Persian ballet and of the Prince's serfs were alike admirable, and the old Prince himself was a joy to behold as he made his *grande toilette* before the tragic setting out for the journey to Moscow.

Of the setting for Rimsky-Korsakov's "Nuit de Mai," one remembers nothing—not even the ballet; only the strange unforgettable beauty of Smirnov's voice.

V

GONTCHAROVA AND LARIONOV

WITH Natalia Gontcharova and Michael Larionov we are confronted with two very remarkable examples of the Russian rebel artist of a later generation. For them academies are anathema, their traditions merely obstructive, and their so-called laws a barrier erected for their own protection, and entirely lacking any weight of recognizable authority. Rebellion is a sacred duty, and death itself but a negligible episode in so romantic a cause as the rescue of art from the grip of the academicians.

It is youth's eternal mission to challenge the domination of the old, and any community where the young were not convinced of the incapacity of their elders would be in a state of stagnation. Unrest is a certain and inevitable symptom of all growth, social, physical or mental, and complete stability but the prelude to degeneration and death. So we may take it that rebellion is but an expression of vitality, and may be of ultimate service to the State. The philosophy of rebellion against tradition is somewhat paradoxical, and rebels have often found that they have by their own actions but established the truth of the very doctrines they have derided and set out to demolish. For it is certain that traditional precepts can only attain the rank of immutable law by their survival of mental revolutions. Into this battle of old against young,

which raged furiously in Russia ten years ago, our two artists flung themselves wholeheartedly. But as both sides were equally sincere adorers of the beautiful, the high unalterable features of their Goddess were in no way damaged by the fighting that raged round her.

Pursuing the same high ideals, though equipped with very different weapons for their attainment, these two artists have worked side by side influencing and counter-influencing each other without ever sacrificing their own individuality. Gontcharova is intellectual and passionless except where the freedom of her country or her art is in question. Well born and highly educated, she combines a love for the traditional past with a horror of the fetters it seeks to impose on the present. She was brought up as a member of that wisest of all churches, the church that in her doctrines, as in her ikons, ordains for ever the unchangeable outlines, but allows the utmost freedom in the interpretation of all detail within those outlines. Grave, reticent and disciplined almost to asceticism, she is outwardly the complete antithesis of Larionov. A great, noisy son of the people, a frank lover of all the good things of life, he is apparently as anti-intellectual as Gontcharova is the reverse. Impulsive, generous and improvident, a born fighter and incorrigibly romantic, he has so many of the qualities of an Irishman that one suspects that there must be some forgotten Celtic ancestor among his forbears. One can figure him as he must have flashed through that grim battle of the Masurian Lakes in 1914, where he received the wounds that ended his career as a soldier. He is forty-one years old, he looks about twenty-eight, and is as

headstrong and unreasonable as a boy of seventeen. He has gaily drawn a series of terrifying illustrations to an abominable book of Bolshevik marching songs, and he is chafing to be off to the fighting himself, though it is certain that he would turn back at the first exhibition of cruelty that he encountered. It is astonishing that two such diverse natures should have been able to work together for so long a time. Ten years ago they founded the sect of the Cubist Rayonnists,[1] and their fame thenceforward was great in Moscow, where they scandalized the old and roused the enthusiasm of the young by the audacity of their heresies. They preached the beauty of the abstract and synthetic, as against the realistic and representational in painting, they held exhibitions of incredible numbers of their drawings, and, to keep their names before the world (at least I can imagine no other reason), they and their disciples went about with green or purple wigs, and parti-coloured clothes, and with their faces adorned with little paintings of flowers, or birds, or even elephants. It is said that in one of her exhibitions Gontcharova showed no less than 700 drawings dealing with the abstract qualities of light.

In a fortunate moment in 1913 she encountered Diaghilev, who instantly detected in her the great artist that lay behind the distracted formalist, and by 1914 she had burst upon Paris and London as the creator of the décor of the "Coq D'Or." No one who saw the opera as it was given at Drury Lane in that year is ever likely to forget the beauty of those enchanting scenes where the rainbow-coloured dancers

[1] On this subject I have added further explanation at the end of this chapter.

were flanked by the sombre purple rows of singers—the King's palace, whose very walls seemed to rock with laughter, the wonder of the great pavilion that rose where the moon had set in that dire ravine, and flooded the stage with a light more dazzling than hers, or the procession of fabulous creatures that heralded the returning King and Queen in their monstrous chariot.

Here was, indeed, a fairy story set out as it should be, where the wealth of imaginative detail only enhanced the serenely childlike simplicity of the general design. The crowning masterpiece of Rimsky-Korsakov had at last found a setting worthy of it, and Gontcharova had leapt straight into European fame. The subsequent history of that wonderful setting is rather depressing, and quite typical of the haphazard way of doing things that characterizes opera in England. When it reappeared in 1918, half the scenery was missing, a translation more than usually irritating had been provided, the stolid English opera singers buffooned it almost to death, and the heavy-footed British maidens stamped through the ballet music of the second act like Grenadiers. The performance was only made tolerable by the fine playing of the orchestra and the entirely delightful Queen. But once again the opera triumphed through the loveliness of its music and its setting, and in spite of the ill-treatment it had received.

Gontcharova's next important work was the Spanish setting for the "Triana" of Albeniz and the "Rhapsodie Espagnole" of Ravel. We can only judge it by the drawings, and from them we can see that she has got back again to her beloved formulas. The more advanced of them show us a sort of com-

posite simplification of a form in movement. The features may be duplicated, or the head indicated only by the curve of a cheek or a single eye. Parts of the body appear as seen from the front, while other parts, in the same drawing, may be of the back or in pure profile. The pattern of shawl, or skirt, is obvious in square or triangular blocks, and the whole is dominated by the insistent forms of the fan, the comb, and the long fringes of the shawl. Rapid movement is suggested either by duplication of an object or by the background being allowed to appear through it. The weight of anything is to be measured by its squareness and its mobility by the sharpness of its triangle. The theory of it all is obscure and difficult to explain, the practical result remains for us the only real interest. There can be no questioning the beauty of the drawings as pure pattern, or the skill with which the lines and masses are balanced. The antipathy which they may, and undoubtedly do, arouse, is mainly psychological, and due to the instinctive dislike for any distortion or rearrangement of the human form, which is the form not only of man, but traditionally of God and the angels, and therefore sacrosanct, and to meddle with which is sacrilege. I do not gather that the cubist character of the drawings was carried through in the actual arrangement of the dresses for the stage, or, at all events, it was only barely indicated by the accentuation of the main folds and shadows. It remains to be said that as working drawings they presented little difficulty to the dressmaker, and were, in fact, much easier to carry out than many that are more apparently orthodox.

In her other experiment, "La Liturgie," she has adopted another convention. Here she has sought to impose on

her executants the hieratic attitudes of the figures in the orthodox ikons. Arms and legs are bound into permanent angles, folds in the dresses are stiffened, and shadows darkened, and a general impression of carven immobility of the body is sought for. The faces are painted heavily, and a fixed expression of austere ecstasy is thereby attained. The ethereal character of the angelic beings is indicated by the easier rippling of their draperies, and their heads are held high in contrast to the bowed necks of the human saints and sinners. Hands and feet alone are free. Rhythmic movements of single figures, or groups of figures, and the sound of the beating of the feet on a hollow stage, replace the swift dancing and the music of ordinary ballets. The first scene is enacted in front of an ikonostas, and the action follows the life of Christ, Who Himself only appears once, and then in the form of a majestic carved figure much larger than life, borne on the shoulders of His followers at the entry into Jerusalem. All the music is given in the entr'actes, and is taken from the liturgical music of the Orthodox Church. The ballet was put into rehearsal at Lausanne in 1915, but subsequently abandoned, temporarily only, let us hope. It would be a wonderful spectacle, but one mistrusts the Censor's attitude when confronted with such a scenario.

Larionov has contributed but two ballets to the series that we know. The first, "The Midnight Sun," produced in Paris in 1915, and in London in 1918, was also the first of the Massine ballets. The music is taken from Rimsky-Korsakov's opera, "Snegourotchka," and the dancing an episode in the Festival of the Sun in some village of mediæval Russia. The

scene showed us the deep blue sky of midnight, and high in the heaven was hung a triple row of golden suns. The dancers were in rose and green and gold, and their great headdresses gave one an odd impression of swaying flowers as they moved. It was all very gay and splendid and Russian, and one of the very best of the shorter ballets. It is a conspicuous example of the right use of pure, full colour, and of the unity of effect that can be achieved by consistently working upon a basis of one colour as a musician works from one key. The master colour in this case was blue, with it modulation towards green and rose freely used, but with almost entire suppression of yellow and white. It was the first ballet in which singing was used to accompany the dancing, an experiment whose success has justified the more extensive use of the voice that we know in the later ballets.

In 1917, "Contes Russes" (Children's Tales), Larionov's second ballet, was produced with admirable music selected from the works of Liadov. It was longer than anything they had hitherto given us, and as it required five different scenes, it gave an opportunity of which Larionov availed himself to the full. His colour-sense was never at fault, and the audacity of his experiments was completely justified by its unquestionable success. He mixed realism and symbolism without injury to either, and triumphantly defied all received canons of art in his juxtaposition of colours. The Kikimora scene showed the same mastery in the handling of pure yellow and white that his setting of "Midnight Sun" had shown in the treatment of blue ; its effect was dazzling in its intensity and achieved by the simplest means. The clear beauty of the

whole dragon scene, the colour, the movement, and the music of it, was profoundly moving. One felt the same emotional thrill as one does when one is suddenly confronted with the view over Poole Harbour from the Corfe Road or with Goya's drawing of Wellington.

Larionov's drawings have an air at first sight of being clumsy and careless, and then win your admiration by their vitality and ruthless suppression of the unessential. Like Gontcharova, he has a whole sackful of formulas in his desk, but he is too sincere an artist to tie himself to any of them, and, on the whole, I do not think they will do him much harm. Larionov's two ballets mark the culminating point of the purely Russian section of Diaghilev's enterprise, and with Gontcharova's "Coq D'Or" are worthy to take their place among the greatest artistic achievements of the theatre.

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A Note on the Cubist-Rayonnist Theory.—The Cubist articles in this composite creed are already dimly understood in England, or if they are not, it is for no lack of explanation. We are constantly confronted with the materialization of its precepts, and its propaganda is notably efficient. Rayonnism carries us further along the path of abstraction and is more logical and consistent in its tenets. The Cubist will leave you an odd feature here and there by which you can identify a face.

The Rayonnist will have none of that. His is a new world where the mysterious fourth dimension crops up to the upsetting of the other three. I will attempt a brief summary of its principles, as I have gathered them from a small book by Larionov, entitled *Radiantismo*, a translation through French

from the Russian into Italian, and possibly made more obscure during its adventures.

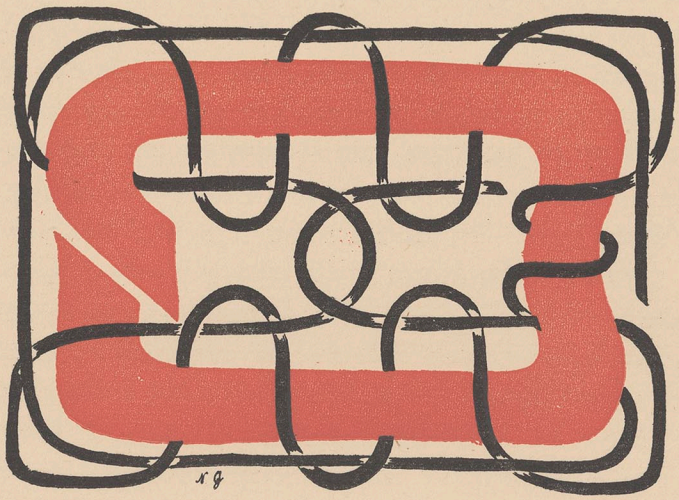
"All forms attain objectivity by means of the rays that emanate from them through the surrounding Ether. The intense perpetual conflict of the rays from diverse objects, their consequent deflections and intensifications, and the new intangible, infinite forms thereby produced in space, are the quest and study of Painting in its highest, most philosophic, stage.

"To attempt the realization of forms by means of their enclosing lines is but to use Painting as a series of formulas for registering the shapes of objects. Rayonnism prefers to look upon painting as an end in itself, and not simply as a means of expression."

Now all this sounds like good sense provided, first, that, as seems scientifically probable, the rays are there, and, second, that the eye of the painter can be trained to see them. On neither point has Larionov the slightest doubt; there, reproduced, are the drawings that prove it. Now I cannot ascertain if these drawings are only the records of purely personal experiences, or whether, being subject to scientific law, and varying only with the skill of the painter, they are in consequence intelligible to any other equally expert eye. Whatever the answer, it is clear that the inexpert cannot hope to understand their full meaning, but must be content to judge the statements by the beauty of their pure pattern.

It is a stimulating thought that a new world awaits us if we but train our eyes to see it; though, possibly, a Rayonnist, like

a Medium, is born and not made. However that may be, we must be grateful to this pair of visionaries for the many things of beauty (on the lower plane) that they have set before our untrained eyes, and wait patiently and cheerfully for the day, when we too shall be counted among the Illuminati.



and again colour everywhere. From the North their love of embroidered linens, patiently worked through the long winter days, and from the East the gorgeous pageantry of jewels, velvets and brocaded silks. In the North they have learned the endurance of hardship; in the East they have experienced a subtler cruelty.

Their Northern church, with its hosts of interceding saints, all powerful to defend them from the grotesquely lurid Hell that otherwise certainly awaits them, is a very different affair from the bland, complacent creed of the East, with its promise of inevitable Paradise for all the faithful. But here again the East has taken the sting from the orthodox doctrine, and Hell, to the Russian, is justly and *almost* exclusively reserved for his enemies—the tinge of doubt merely adding a touch of adventure to the sordid moment of death.

And, last of all, is there any nation but the Russian (and the Irish) that still, in these days of scepticism, cherishes with such delight and such everyday familiarity its national treasure of legend and tradition—half history and half fairy-tale—but wholly to be beloved and believed? With us folklore is a cult of the moment, a matter of Leagues and Societies—an opportunity for patronage of the unlettered by the intellectuals —a round of dreary folk-songs and dances, revived from Museum records, dead things galvanized into a simulated life. With them it is the first link in the unbroken chain of their History; and that sense of History is universal throughout Russia, the basis of all their greatest poetry, drama and music.

Any review of the Russian outlook in the matter of æsthetics shows us the nature of the resources on which Diaghi-

lev must no longer draw in his quest for internationalism. But there is one other and very practical point that calls for notice. If he desires to leave all things Russian behind him, he must go forward deprived of the help of the only company of artists that have ever been trained to the special work of Painting for the Theatre ; men traditionally expert in the massing and arrangement of colour and form, and accustomed to the difference that artificial light, brilliant and concentrated, will make to their studio-planned schemes. It is a very specialized Art, and every painter, however eminent outside the Theatre, must pass through his apprenticeship, with the probability of failure in his first attempts.

In compensation for all that had to be jettisoned, what were the advantages that might be hoped for ?

When we come to consider this question we get fresh light on the character of Diaghilev. The changes he contemplated were not of the sort that would be likely to bring him *any* immediate practical advantage. His new path was beset with difficulties and great risks. Easy success lay before him if he chose to continue along his old lines. His ambition led him by the more hazardous way of exploration, with no small prospect of failure at the outset.

But as the adventure promised in the end the only sort of reward he cared for, it was assuredly worth daring.

There need be no limit to the field of his research ; for he felt that he could bend to his service whatever new conceptions of painting and dancing, whatever new embroidery of tone and rhythm he might find.

The practical application of these new doctrines would

assuredly be difficult, but he had full confidence in the technical ability of his company, and in the mental alertness of his audiences.

The visionary in him could prefigure the ultimate strange beauty that he would evoke, while the idealist cared little for the money and time that would have to be spent in attaining it.

The problem of the dancing he left for the moment to Massine, and of the music to Stravinsky. For himself he reserved the question of the painting.

There was a new philosophy of painting being preached in the West, a militant revolutionary philosophy whose very aggressiveness delighted his mind. He had for some time been a warm adherent of the movement, he had several personal friends among its leaders, and he felt that with their help he could revolutionize the whole Art of the Theatre, if they could but adapt their painting to his needs.

The men he lighted on for the great experiment were Henri Matisse, André Derain and Pablo Picasso, men enjoying international fame, at the moment, men of widely different temperament, only united in a common disdain of the law-abiding and the academic among their contemporaries. He could scarcely have chosen better. He knew Matisse well by the great paintings and decorations that abounded in the galleries of the Moscow millionaires; Derain is the darling of that curious circle of zealots and foreign financiers that dictate the artistic taste of Paris, by whom he is declared to combine the soul of a primitive with the dramatic power of El Greco; and as to Picasso, he is a master, when he will, of most delicate line, but a man of whom it is impossible to say whither the extrava-

gance of his fancy will lead him : who will draw like Ingres one day and like a madman on the next : in short a man to whom one might look for the most beautiful or the most revolutionary stage setting ever conceived.

Diaghilev having chosen his painters proceeded to allot them their rôles—Matisse he mated with Stravinsky, Derain, strangely enough, with Rossini, and Picasso, first with Erik Satie, a laughing cynic like himself, next with Manoel de Falla his fellow-countryman, and lastly with Pergolesi—an entirely unsuitable and unfruitful alliance.

VII

DERAIN AND PICASSO

THE first of the new ballets to appear was Derain's "La Boutique Fantasque" (1919), and a gayer, more exhilarating entertainment it would be difficult to imagine. His company had certainly de-Russianized themselves, and "Paris 1870" was glaringly stamped over the whole production. Two-thirds of the music was Rossini at his best, the remaining third was the commonest sort of rubbish; the merits of the dancing bore about the same proportion of good and bad. The first and the last thirds were admirable, and showed Massine at his most ingenious and resourceful. But there were plentiful dull moments, and episodes, like the Cossacks and the dogs, and the horrible little man with the cart, that fell deplorably below any level the ballet had ever descended to. But the main interest of the evening was in the setting. Here was to be the first example of the far-reaching change that had come over the ballet—the work of a man who, with the zeal of a Primitive, combined the science and sensibility of the twentieth century; who had come fresh to his work unspoilt by any acquaintance with stage conventions. Well! it was at first sight frankly uncouth and almost defiantly ugly—the pervading colours a hot brown against a cold grey, with chairs and tables that defied all the laws of perspective roughly painted on the background and the

wings—and far behind, seen through the arches of the shop-front, a child's dream of houses, hills and trees, and a little river with a gigantic paddle-steamer that filled it from end to end. It was like the work of a ten-year-old schoolgirl, and yet the simplicity of its design was so transparently sincere, there was such a feeling of air and space everywhere—the colour of the background was so clear and cool as seen through the brown screen—and above all there were such enchanting arrangements of fruits and flowers painted on the wings, that one forgave all those yards of ugly colour and the impossible furniture. After all, you knew there must be chairs in a shop, but they were unimportant to the play, and it was enough to indicate roughly their presence by a few fat helpful curves and the stage looked furnished—the spirit of them was visible, and any insistence on their details or attempt at realistic drawing of them would have been artistically wrong. With the making of the scene, I think Derain's interest in his work obviously ended, and one glance at the drawings he made for the dresses shows how much of their charm was owing to other hands than his. But to him we must assign the real ugliness of the ballet-girls' dresses and the unpleasant details in the make-up of most of the men—details that Massine had only too faithfully carried out. It was on the whole the most painter-like décor we had seen—in contrast to the purely decorative treatment that uses the background merely as a foil. Everything that was visible within the frame of the stage played its deliberate part in the composition of the whole picture, with the lines, colours, and masses of figures and background acting and re-acting the one on the other, and with all the arbitrary suppression or emphasis

of detail that is allowed to a painter used to its fullest extent. It was as bracing as a cold bath even if it did make one's teeth chatter. The trumpet note of defiance was sounded with the appearance of that strident curtain with its great ill-drawn figures and its sense of overbearing vitality. It was a strange contrast to the exquisite little " Marche Slave " that served as an overture, and that was almost drowned by the ripple of comment that the curtain evoked from the audience.

The " Boutique," as a whole, met with sharp rebuke from the sterner critics, and there is no doubt that it, to some extent, lowered the prestige of the ballet. However brilliant the dancing, the fact that a great part of it was but a reproduction of the grosser cabaret dances of Paris certainly justified the criticism.

Of Derain as a painter we in England have had little chance of forming any just opinion. What we have seen would not certainly appear to justify the eulogies that have been poured forth in his honour. One feels certain of his sincerity, even when faced by his strange drawings. He has, undoubtedly, a very personal vision and a mind intensely interested in the play of light on solid structures as it presents itself to his eyes. But in view of certain constantly recurring distortions in his work the question arises whether he suffers, as did his greater predecessor, El Greco, from astigmatism.

" Le Tricorne," the first of the Picasso ballets, coming some three months later, called forth none of the controversy that " La Boutique " had aroused. No one's feelings were outraged by it, and if there was hostile criticism it was on the ground of a certain dullness, an aimlessness in the movements of the crowds

and an apparent monotony of rhythm. On the last point I am disposed to agree that the unbroken sequence of heavy emphatic rhythms did tend to become monotonous ; as to the other objections I certainly did not find any of those moments of dullness and indecision that I had noticed in " La Boutique."

But what there was for all the world to see was the delicate flickering beauty of the scene, the suggestion by a single masterly line here and there of hill or bridge, the faint stars silver in a silver-blue sky and the sun-bleached rose of the wall that told you of all the heat of that Southern village. Here was indeed the master of the fine drawings and the very sensitive etched plates that one had known for ten years and more. There had been nothing in all the long series to compare with the ethereal beauty of this.

The first few minutes of the ballet passed in perfect contentment with only the daintily moving figures of the young miller and his wife, the boy in the distance dancing over the bridge with his great kite and the sound of that sudden voice of the prologue still echoing through the courtyard. With the entry of the other characters one began to feel less at ease. The beauty began to fade with the insistence of those noisy dresses, dresses that never seemed to move with the wearers or answer the changing curves of their bodies, that looked as if they were cut in cardboard, harshly barred and rayed, with all their contours heavily outlined in black. One or two of such queer garments might have been forgiven, but multiplied to ten or twenty, they became merely ugly. Here and there were single figures of great beauty, but on the whole, in the matter of the clothes, Picasso had failed through his freakishness as Derain had

by his indifference. Still, the freakish and the arrestingly ugly are better to bear in Picasso than the merely commonplace prettiness of lesser people, and one took it cheerfully and came to the conclusion that "Le Tricorne" could rank among the best of its fellows. One expects a Faun to gambol, and forgives his occasional clumsiness for the sweet playing of his pipes.

The "Tricorne" was followed in the autumn of 1919 by "Parade" in which Picasso had worked with Erik Satie—a disconcerting little ballet that had been produced in Paris during the short, comparatively unsuccessful, season at the Châtelet in the summer of 1917. It had met with vehement criticism, excitedly friendly and as unreasonably hostile. Russians were decidedly unpopular just then, and the Ballet shared the general disfavour in which their countrymen were held.

Exaggeration of its qualities and defects was as easy as it was uncalled for. Composer, painter and producer had got to work in their most irresponsible vein, and it was a mistake to weight such a trifle with so much learned talk. It was neither a work of genius nor an exhibition of Bolshevik Anarchy.

The music was noisy and discordant, but the blatancy and the dissonance were the deliberate choice of a clever musician; it rattled and jolted along with all the cross-currents of sound of a normal country fair. Orthodox dancing was not to be looked for where two out of the seven characters were built up into the semblance of towers, and a third one was a horse. It was mainly a ballet of gesture.

The curtain, founded on Seurat's famous picture, and the scene with the tall, threatening, black buildings and the white front of the booth were undeniably arresting. The curtain,

particularly, was remarkable for its broad, serene, classical air. Its only fault was that it had too much the look of a picture, and lacked the decorative formality that a curtain demands, as belonging to the proscenium rather than to the inner stage.

The "Managers" gave me no misgivings. They seemed to typify the overbearing, un-human monsters that they must appear from the point of view of the artists that work under them. I could even forgive the Horse for the unexpected elegance of its pose when it sat down. It was a ballet to laugh with and not to laugh at.

As for "Pulcinella" (1920), it fell between the two stools of ancient and modern. Stravinsky had knocked Pergolesi out of shape and Picasso had destroyed the unity of the graceful eighteenth-century setting by a background most formidably modern. The results were distressing to eye and ear alike; the trombones and distorted houses cloud one's recollection of the singing, and of the two young dandies that flew about the stage like pink and blue feathers in a summer wind. In other circumstances I should have no quarrel with the houses that were cut into fantastic shapes by the insistent moon behind them—but their convention broke down badly when their windows opened, and one found that solid human beings were living in them.

The whole thing was a misdirected effort on Diaghilev's part. Pergolesi and the Pulcinella legend called for more gentle handling than they could expect to get from two such masterful beings as Stravinsky and Picasso.

These two men would probably work admirably together if the opportunity were given them. They stand, with Gontcharova,

apart from all the others, both in their fearlessness and their power, thinking always for themselves, untouched by fashion or convention.

They have not been uniformly successful, nor are they ever likely to be. But as we watch them march forward, we forget their hesitations and mistakes, and only remember their courage and the genius that directs them.

VIII

MATISSE AND SERT

WE have just spoken of the mistakes that men of genius will inevitably make, and of the forgiveness that is so readily accorded to them. But we must reserve our easy forgiveness for the imperfections that occur in some nobly planned scheme, for the moments when genius has wavered or imagination led it astray.

A more severe judgment is called for in such a case as the ballet "Le Rossignol" (1920), an instance where a wonderful work of art, long planned and patiently wrought to perfection, had been deliberately spoilt.

It was some evil spirit that suggested the idea to Diaghilev—but it must have needed the intervention of the Devil himself to have induced Stravinsky to help, with his own hands, in the murder of this child of his brain.

The lovely legend had stood up so bravely in the face of all that thunder of music in the opera, and, fragile as it was, had still dominated the scene. Then the opera was wantonly butchered to make a ballet and with it died the legend. The angry ghost of Hans Andersen should certainly haunt the bedsides of all the perpetrators of the crime.

If ever a story demanded the human voice to illustrate it, it was surely the "Nightingale," and if ever we had heard voices used to perfection it had been in that opera.

From the beginning to the end, from the opening notes of the fisherman's song to its recurrence as the curtain fell, there had been no moment when the voice had not been paramount. Who could imagine it without the incredible bird-songs, the Simian chatter of the courtiers or the snarling of the baffled Death ?

But someone—was it Massine or another?—evidently *did* imagine it. The fatal word Ballet was whispered, and away went the voices and on came the acrobats. The fisherman's song was given to the horn and the Nightingale's to the flute, and the white bird and Death fought for the Emperor's life in a " Pas de Deux."

The great Henri Matisse had undertaken to provide the décor for this astonishing performance. There was every prospect that the mounting would be as startling as the music and the dancing. He was as experienced in the treatment of large surfaces as he was scornful of precedent and tradition. But on this occasion I think he was puzzled and a little timid.

The uniform paleness of the colour was only decided on, I believe, after much searching of heart and trial of alternative schemes. It was misty, intangible, vague ; the figures as they moved silently before the pale background were like spirits passing at dawn. One awaited impatiently the song of the birds and the coming of the sun.

But the birds had suffered the cruellest change; one was like a Javanese bride, the other was a cockatoo—and both were dumb. As to the Sun, when once the red Death and the black mourning had been swept aside, not even his twenty yards of pink velvet could warm us to any enthusiasm.

The women's clothes were pretty enough, but it was a stereotyped form of prettiness which savoured (as one of his colleagues said) of the Galeries Lafayette. They would have matched the legend for naive simplicity, had it been allowed to survive, but after its death, the little ladies fluttered about like pale moths caught in the glare of the blinding music—irresolute and afraid.

White, sparingly patterned with black, was used for most of the men's dresses, so that they, too, looked like initiates preparing some mysterious rite, and the soldiers had all the air of executioners.

The pale hand of Death was outstretched over the whole scene, and there was silence where there had been singing and convulsive movements of fear instead of dancing.

If the fairy-tale had been transformed into a tragedy, to Matisse is largely due its impressiveness in its new form.

But the question as to why ever it was done must remain unanswered.

Matisse remains, for me, pre-eminently a landscape-painter. As such, I think, he takes his place among the great seekers after truth, carrying on the succession of Sisley, Cézanne and Van Gogh. But when he begins to paint figures he seems to be no longer a free man. With infinite pains and ruthless suppression he tries to wring from his subject the naked essence of its being; but never a stroke can he make without some ghostly inquisitor at his elbow bidding him seek again if it be really needed, or if there be no better way of making it.

He seems to forget that every human personality is but an aggregation of almost identical factors, each unimportant in

itself, and that only in the variation of their arrangement and proportion does one individual differ from another.

If, then, he goes on eliminating one after another of these factors, as being in themselves inessential, he is in danger of finally missing the very thing he has sought so patiently, and his subject will have become a mask hung in the air, a frame unfilled.

. . . . . .

After being in the company of these three restless explorers one approaches the work of José Maria Sert with the same sense of comfortable security that one has felt in dropping down on to Dawlish after a furious drive across Dartmoor. The lines are all so easy, the people all so smiling and gaily dressed, there is such a promise of peace in that fat land that one shudders at the memory of the frowning rocks and elemental discord one has left behind.

Someone had by chance lighted on a forgotten score of that old wanderer Cimarosa, " Le Astuzie Femminili," in which could be found a reference to the " Ballo Russo " of the period.

The discovery fired Diaghilev's imagination. He would revive it, Ballo Russo and all. Respighi should fortify its rather meagre orchestration, and Sert, past-master of the Baroque, should prepare a mise-en-scène worthy of the memory of the Great Catherine to whom it had been dedicated.

The Opera turned out to be rather tedious, and through its first two acts gave Sert little chance to display his special gifts ; only a room, a garden, and four or five singers.

I think he foresaw the tediousness and rather forced his effects in his endeavour to interest the audience. He over-

insisted on extravagance of outline and colour in his dresses. He set his people in a room of many hues and curious shape, and he planted in their garden an enormous tree of coral. It was an heroic attempt to make much out of little.

But once again the "Ballo Russo" saved the situation, and in the third act, when the dancers had got possession of the stage, all went easily and well.

The scene was the terrace of some Roman palace. There was little colour in the background, beyond the silver and blue of colonnades and springing domes, and the city stretched golden in the moonlight. It was a wonderful foil for the glittering dancers, and Sert had treated it with great skill. The complex architecture and the fantastically dressed crowd were subjects he could deal with as no one else could.

The music throughout the act was delightful, the dancers excelled themselves, and the curtain came down on success where failure had seemed imminent.

Sert traces his descent from Veronese and Tiepolo. Unfortunately for him there are no patrons about in these days to order the decoration of churches or palaces, and it is among the rich that he must always work. His is a sumptuous, artificial world, where it would be improper to mention pain or poverty.

There is no doubt that Dawlish is a comfortable place, but after a short spell of it most of us long to be back on Dartmoor.

IX

SERGE DE DIAGHILEV

TWO essential qualifications for successful leadership are experience and audacity. But while the passage of time intensifies the former it weakens and finally kills the latter : so that no one can long remain an ideal leader unless he can find some means of renewing his youth.

It is because Diaghilev so quickly grasped the truth of this fact that his enterprise has lasted so long and that after twelve years it still retains its full vigour. For in addition to his own experience of twenty years' unbroken activity in the world of Art, he has endowed his venture with perennial youth by working always through the minds of men much younger than himself. Fokine was well under thirty, Nijinsky and Massine barely twenty, when he picked them out for their commissions. And it is this combination of his mature judgment with the audacity of his young lieutenants that has given his whole movement so strange a distinction.

When we think for a moment what it is that he does we begin to get the measure of the extraordinary man that he is. Year in year out, he has the destinies of some sixty people entirely on his shoulders. He has no permanent home, no theatre of his own, no endowments now on which to draw. He must move perpetually through the cities of Europe and

the vast distances of America to earn the money with which to support his great family, and in addition to all the planning and foreseeing that this entails, he must for ever be suggesting, and thinking out new projects. He must keep abreast of all new movements in Art, and look for new musicians and painters. He must be prepared for failure and resolute to acknowledge it when it comes to him. He may lose his dancers by illness or marriage, or they may desert him for the prospect of higher pay elsewhere, and he must be ready with others to replace them.

His is a life that admits of little rest—his way is ringed round with difficulties, and even when they are surmounted there can be no sure promise of fortune at the end or of any reward other than that of the artist whose supreme joy is to dream dreams and watch them come true.

Government by autocracy is the only conceivable rule under which such a company as Diaghilev's could prosper; and autocratic he certainly is at most times. But through all the long stages that precede the birth of a new ballet he is wise enough to merge the autocrat in the counsellor. "Primus inter pares" he may be; but the practical equality of all his colleagues at these times is as well recognized as his own leadership is unobtrusive. While the great project is taking shape he and his council of four or five will spend most of their days together and talk far into their nights, their minds gradually working into unison till such time as the framework has been built up and they can go their own ways to work out the details of their separate tasks.

Multiple authorship as we know it in England leads to a

result that is invariably and hopelessly amorphous. But with the ballet it is the means by which they attain the unity and balance that all good Art demands.

To see Diaghilev at a rehearsal is to know an altogether different side of him and to realize that behind the easy-going dilettante lies the stern master-director. To watch this apparently impassive spectator rush from his stall to the footlights and shout his directions to the dancers in rapid and very forcible Russian is an experience in psychology that no one is likely to forget.

His grasp of minute detail is as impressive as is his power of imposing his wishes. He will ask from his dancers the apparently impossible and, miraculously, get it performed. The way of perfection is hard, as they must often have realized when asked to repeat a short passage some twenty consecutive times, in order to correct, by the matter of a few inches, the precision of a movement which to the uninitiated already appeared perfect.

That his enterprise should have survived the War is astonishing, and the record of his journeys between 1914 and 1918 is a convincing proof of his courage and determination. The thunderbolt fell within a week of the termination of that memorable Drury Lane Season, and many of the more important members of his company hurried back to Russia. I think that ninety-nine men out of a hundred in Diaghilev's position would have judged the difficulties of continuing to be insuperable.

But the company was as his only child; the men and women of it were dependent entirely on him; and for this

reason, apart altogether from his own ambitions, he decided to go forward.

He carried his company over to America, fulfilled his engagements there and was back in Europe by the autumn of 1915. There was a wonderful little season in Paris in December, when he produced the "Midnight Sun," and earned no less than £4000 for the Red Cross. Then away again to America in January 1916 for three months: and after a summer spent in Spain, another long season opened at New York in the autumn. Between the 16th of October and the end of February 1917, the company danced in over fifty towns through the length and breadth of the United States. Then again back in Europe, April was spent in Italy, May in Paris and June in Spain, this last visit being signalized by the return of Nijinsky to the company after his internment in Hungary. Between July and September they were in South America and returned finally to Europe in November 1917, spending their time in Spain until they could get through to England, where they landed in August 1918.

It was a tremendous Odyssey, carried through under conditions that might have daunted the old Greek himself, and it involved no less than eight Atlantic crossings through all the perilous times of the submarine warfare. If there were seasons of prosperity there were equally periods of adversity, more especially during the first half of 1918, which only the tenacity and resourcefulness of their leader enabled the company to survive.

X

CHOREGRAPHY—FOKINE

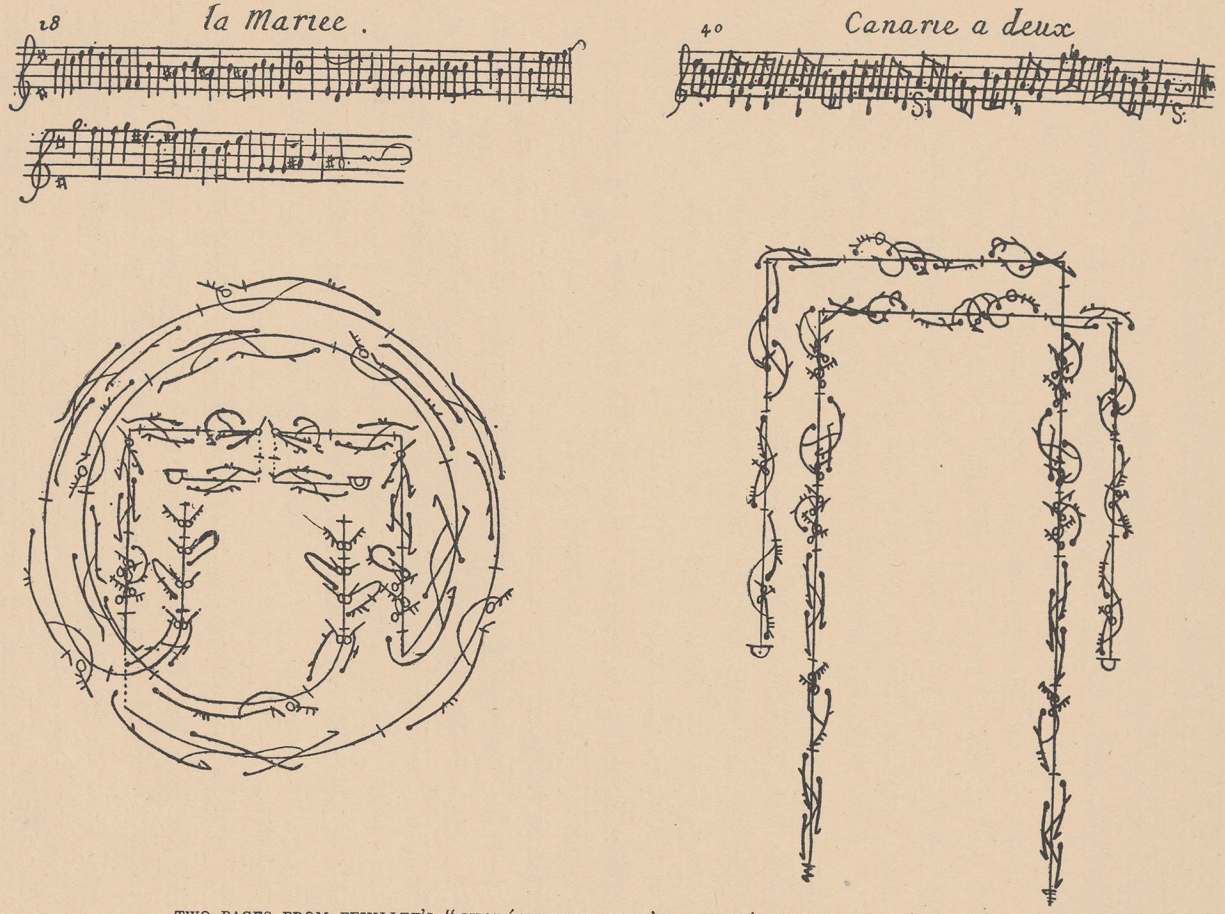
WE come at last to the consideration of the choregraphy of the ballets and the characteristics of its three exponents—Michel Fokine, Vaslav Nijinsky and Leonide Massine.

Choregraphy is a subject in which Englishmen since the days of Taglioni have shown little interest; its elaborate vocabulary is a sealed book to them, and even the word itself had been forgotten till the Russians re-introduced it ten years ago.

The true choregraphy of the eighteenth century was a system of notation that took the form of detailed charts, wherein the figures of a dance were indicated in a series of intricate diagrams. How ingenious it was, and what inexhaustible patience it required to decipher it will be obvious from the reproductions of two pages from Feuillet's method, published in 1700.

The practice that the word connotes has long since been given up, but the word itself survives, and in its new application serves to cover the whole field of activity of the maître-de-ballet, and for want of an alternative we must leave it in possession.

Nijinsky, in the preparation of the "Sacre du Printemps," made great efforts to transcribe, step by step, the whole ballet. But the sheets multiplied so alarmingly, and it was so apparent



TWO PAGES FROM FEUILLET'S "CHORÉGRAPHIE, OU L'ART DE DÉCRIRE LA DANSE." PARIS, 1700.

that no one but himself would ever be able to interpret them, that he gave it up, and relied thenceforward entirely on his faultless memory. In view of his failure we must assume that unless, or until, some simpler method of notation is invented, there can be no detailed records of the ballets, and if they are to survive it must be through oral tradition handed on by each generation of dancers to their successors.

The Ballet d'Action in Russia up to 1900 still retained its old form, the story being told by gesture and the dances being treated as interludes, more or less illustrative. By judiciously complicating the plot and multiplying the auxiliary characters, by adding a procession here and there, and, if possible, an apotheosis, it was not difficult to spin it out to the regulation four or five acts. Indeed it was the main ground of objection to the reformed ballet that it seldom lasted over half an hour.

The music was supplied to the order of the ballet-master by one of the journeyman-composers attached to the Opera House ; and as long as it had the requisite number of bars no one paid much attention to its quality. Even the dancers almost completely ignored it during the acted episodes, for the reason that the art of rhythmical gesture was not as yet fully understood.

The artistic rightness of this form of ballet began to be questioned in the early years of this century, and with the arrival of Fokine various efforts were made to weld the patchwork into one continuous, consistent whole, and to abandon altogether the tiresome, childish miming.

The expression of emotion was not to be given up. On the

contrary, it was to play a great part in the picturesque exotic ballets that the romantic young Fokine was planning. But it was to be done in some more convincing fashion that he would invent.

For Fokine had fallen under the spell of Isadora Duncan, the high-priestess of emotional dancing, during her visit to Russia in 1907.

That charming lady had a very disturbing effect on Petrograd, with her bare feet and her childlike ignorance of advanced technique. She had poured forth to the reviewers the yearnings of her young American soul, and the sympathetic Russians bowed, for the moment, before her. She told them of the ecstasy of the opening flower and of spirits attuned to the music of the spheres, and in the end her Greek draperies acquired all the significance of a prophet's mantle.

Still, however great the nonsense she sometimes talked, there is one important reform that can be traced directly to her example. For it was she who first showed us the added beauty that great music could give to fine dancing. And when the world got used to her audacity in making use of Chopin and Schumann the vogue of the abominable Minkus and Drigo came to an end.

If her success was mainly due to the magic of her personality, yet her dancing had about it something refreshingly human—a sense of simplicity and the open air—that was in welcome contrast to the over-elaborate virtuosity of the classical ballet of that time.

Fokine, at all events, was fired by her precepts to an heroic attempt to implant the elements of a soul into the Imperial

Ballet, a mission that brought him into conflict with all the *balletomanes* and the influential upholders of the existing regime.

With all his admiration of Isadora Duncan he never wavered in his belief that the most searching technical training was the essential basis of good dancing.

While he disapproved of her indifference to technique he equally disapproved of the others for the misuse they made of it. So he set about to create his own ideals. He imagined a ballet where romance should go hand in hand with high accomplishment and where the unity of aim of the single dancer should inform the movements of the whole company.

As with the ballet, so with the individual. His ideal dancer was a being with the sensibility of a Duncan and the technique of a Kchessinskaia, and, astonishingly, the conception materialized, completely in Nijinsky and almost completely in Pavlova and Karsavina.

So clear were his convictions, so rapidly did he work them out, that by the time he had composed the "Nuits d'Egypte" (his third work) his ideas had practically crystallized; and in the long series that flowed from him during the next six years he maintained a strikingly uniform level of excellence.

He made his début with "La Vigne," which was danced by Pavlova, Karsavina, and himself, to music by Rubinstein. It was unimportant in itself, but it served its purpose, in that it secured for him his appointment as maître-de-ballet. Then followed the more important works, "Eunice," "Nuits d'Egypte," "Carnaval," "Le Pavillon d'Armide," "Chopiniana" (Les Sylphides), and "Islamey." Later on in the Diaghilev period we have the three erotic ballets, "Scheherazade," "Cleopatra"

(a variant of the "Nuits d'Egypte"), and "Thamar"; the two Greek ballets, "Narcisse" and "Daphnis and Chloe," and two by Stravinsky, "L'Oiseau de Feu" and "Petroushka," the series ending brilliantly with the two opera-ballets "Le Chant du Rossignol" and "Le Coq D'Or" in 1914.

Through them all we find him faithful to his ideals: the music is always of the quality that can live by its own merits, the décor is thoughtful and original, and often rises to a surprising level of beauty; while the dancing skilfully avoids both the parade of technique as an end in itself, and the vaporous romanticism of the soul-dancers.

He was at his best in the development of the simpler classical movements, but he knew how to use the most complex of them when opportunity offered, and their effect was all the greater by reason of this restraint.

He was a very able manager of his crowds, and a weaver of beautiful pattern in the choral dancing, of which perhaps the opening of the last movement in "Scheherazade" and the whole of the choral work in "Daphnis and Chloe" are his happiest examples.

He changes remarkably little through his career, his latest ballets hardly differing from his earliest in their main construction. It is, indeed, one of the weakest points about him that he was either content, or obliged by lack of new ideas, to go on reproducing under different guises the type he had long since perfected.

Still his reputation stands secure with such ballets as "Petroushka" and "Les Sylphides" to his credit. The latter perhaps won for itself a special fame as being a perfect example

of the adaptation of old material to new ends, apart altogether from the ordered beauty that shines through every moment of it.

What he had done, he had done brilliantly. If, as seems possible, his day has definitely ended, his name will always be remembered as the rescuer of the ballet from the deadening clutches of an over-zealous conservatism.

Though he reformed the old bad method of gesture he never attained the mastery of gestural dancing, as did his successor, Massine. And to the end of his career the dramatic episodes were acted and not danced.

He was himself a very capable dancer, and had we in England seen him before we saw Nijinsky we might have thought him a great one. But as it was his fate to follow Nijinsky in all the rôles he played here, the difference between genius and talent was only too quickly realized.

XI

NIJINSKY

INTO the midst of Fokine's career breaks the sudden apparition of a transformed Nijinsky. Hitherto we had only known him as a boy who seemed to dance instinctively, without conscious effort, compelled to it by the throbbing of the music and the glitter of the stage as the lark to song by the quivering air and the April sun—and probably as incapable as the lark itself of sustained thought.

It is in "Petroushka" that we get the first hint that he is thinking for himself. The part is all his own, for Fokine had given him perfect freedom in the making of it. Here at last among the puppets of the ballet we have a living individuality, a being that really knows happiness and suffering. It is a character that the ablest dramatist alive might be proud to have created, so complete is it, with such vivid insight is it drawn. No word, no sound, comes from him—none is needed; the whole body of him, the head, the feet, and, above all, the hands, tell the tragedy of his little moonshine existence. It was as perfectly acted as it was conceived, and there was never a moment when he fell back on the old formula of gesture through music; it was pure dancing from beginning to end.

The success of "Petroushka" foreshadowed the coming of Nijinsky into power. And, if we had judged him aright, there was every prospect that the intellectual element would supersede

the merely romantic and emotional in any ballet he might invent. Intellectual it certainly proved to be. For this young master of the *Entrechat-dix*, whose soul was thought to be in his feet, proved himself to be a passionate student of abstract form and a tireless seeker after new plastic expressions that should entirely supersede all classical dancing.

During his wanderings in Europe he had availed himself to the full of the opportunities that were offered to him in the museums of Berlin and Paris for studying the dances of Egypt and Greece as recorded on painted walls or vases.

The clear-cut figures with their broad shoulders, their heads turned sharply to right or left, and their long, slim feet and hands tensely held in some arrested movement, suggested the theme that he subsequently worked out in the ballet danced to Debussy's " Prélude à l'Après-Midi d'un Faune."

It was necessarily two-dimensional in character, and every effort was made to keep the figures moving in one plane. The bodies of the dancers were invariably facing the audience while their heads and limbs were rigidly in profile. There were few continuous movements; they passed by rapid change from one static pose to another.

The convention, so far as the Faun himself was concerned, was perfectly satisfying, and where the action was quiet and the movement processional, the ballet had all the grace of a sculptured frieze. But when the actors moved quickly about the stage, or suddenly reversed their direction without turning their bodies, the constraint of the single plane produced an effect that was almost grotesque.

I have my doubts as to whether the Greeks or Egyptians

VASLAV NIJINSKY *J. E. Blanche*

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ever danced in this way, and I suspect that Nijinsky mistook their artists' purely decorative treatment of the dancing motive for a representation of the actual movements of the dancers.

If it was only doubtfully legitimate, there was a grave enchantment about it that disarmed criticism, and if the scenery had been schematized in like fashion we should have accepted without reserve the singular beauty of this surprising ballet.

It was not yet part of Nijinsky's creed that the music must condition the dancing. Here it was but an accompaniment, an atmosphere of sweet sound in which they danced. And marvellously well it served its purpose, for, as the music dreamed its exquisite way through the ballet it filled the whole theatre with the sense of piping shepherds in scented plains and all the wonder of the Sicilian spring.

In " L'Après-Midi " Nijinsky had devised a ballet out of his own brain, reacting to the impulse he had received from the vases. In his next effort, in close conjunction with Debussy, he set himself the task of interpreting the theories formulated by the famous chorelogist, Jacques Dalcroze, who at this moment appears to have had the same influence over him as Isadora Duncan had had over Fokine.

Dalcroze is a man who in his time has enunciated many doctrines on the plastic interpretation of music. About this time he was preaching that every note of any musical theme that was being used must be marked by some corresponding movement on the part of the dancer.

Whatever the abstract merits of such a theory, it was one that could only be put into practice when the themes were clear and uncomplicated. In the case of " Jeux," all the elements

were favourable for its realization. There were but three dancers, and Debussy, at Nijinsky's instigation, had kept throughout his score a perfectly well-marked rhythm, and his themes stood out unusually clear through the characteristic embroidery that adorned them.

It was the most conscientious performance imaginable—and the most irritating. At every note somebody moved something, even if it were only an eyebrow or a finger. The tennis-ball fell to a downward glissando of the harp, and if real tears had been forthcoming one is sure that they, too, would have fallen in semiquavers.

From these three exquisite dancers we were allowed no single gesture that was spontaneous or natural. So ruthlessly had their humanity been suppressed, that, had the music stopped for a minute, we should almost have expected to hear the clockwork which seemed to move them.

"Le Sacre du Printemps," which followed in the same year, though it followed the same theory was as profoundly moving as its predecessor was halting and ineffectual. But here, instead of clockwork tennis players, we were watching men and women, primitive and unreasoning, helpless in the clutch of some implacable being whose nature they but dimly understood, but of whose merciless power they were horribly aware.

The ballet was divided into two parts, of which the first dealt with the fertilization of the plains by the returning sun, and the second with the propitiation of the earth demon on the hill-crest by the offering of an expiatory sacrifice.

The curtain rose on a green meadow where the villagers, in

festival dress, were assembled in anxious groups. The action took us through their restless moments of waiting for the ceremony of prostration and kissing the earth, their panic terror during its progress, and their rejoicing when it was over. The second part showed us the election of the sacrificial victim from among the maidens of the village, the coming of the horned and hooded priests and the lonely death of the *Vierge élue.*

A stranger subject for a ballet was surely never imagined than these two episodes from the life of a primitive community so bewildered by the caprices of their unreasonable gods that, after the long night of winter fear, they could only see added terror in the sunlight and the dawn of Spring.

I think that only Russians could have wanted or dared to use such a theme. I am sure that no company but Diaghilev's could have carried it through. It demanded a very alert intelligence on their part to follow the flight of Nijinsky's imagination, and a musical perception so keen that they could distinguish their allotted parts in a score of amazing complexity, in which as many as three, and sometimes even four, themes in unrelated keys are running concurrently.

The dancing throughout was determined by the music. The weight and quality of sound was reflected faithfully in the varying numbers of the dancers and the intensity of their movements, and even in the colour of their dresses. The scarlet groups would instantly dominate the stage in some passage of horns and trumpets, while violins or flutes carried the sense of white or grey, of orderly ritual or wavering uncertainty.

There was little opportunity for purely emotional dancing, but there was symbolical beating of the earth and stretching of heads and arms towards the sun, and leaping in the air ; and there was the realism of trembling, huddled fear.

Technically the ballet was of extreme interest. It required great courage on the part of Nijinsky to discard every traditional grace that we had learnt to expect. There was no dancing on the points of the toes, no pirouettes or entrechats. Instead, we saw contorted limbs, toes turned inwards, and heads bent stiffly sideways. Instead of arms moving in rippling curves we saw them strained rigidly downwards or as rigidly bent at the elbow, and instead of the silence of feet that had seemed scarcely to touch the ground they flew over, we heard the stamping and shuffling of insistent shoes.

Certain points stand out particularly among the remarkable achievements of the company in this new technique. One was the Group movement, when six or eight dancers would press together, shoulder to shoulder, without touching or supporting each other, and dance in unison, through intricate movements and with absolute precision. Another was the frenzied dance of the Chosen Maiden that ended in a violently strained pose, which she kept unmoving, through several minutes of extreme discomfort for herself and her audience. Their perfect control in concerted movement was well illustrated in the closing scene when, as the girl fell dead, the priests caught her falling body on the palms of their outstretched hands and bore her aloft to her burial as the curtain fell.

In this ballet we see for the first time the polyrhythmic dancing that Dalcroze had suggested. Nijinsky illustrated it by

setting one group of dancers to beat out softly the contrapuntal accompaniment of a theme which was being directly and more forcibly danced by another set. The device was very brilliantly used at the end of the first act, where the great circle of women moved to the notes of the main theme, while groups of men within the circle swung in smaller circles in threefold counterpoint.

The "Sacre du Printemps" easily outstrips anything the Diaghilev Ballet have done, both in its audacity and its intellectuality. Yet though it had needed 120 rehearsals it was performed only six times. After the first hearing it left one dazed and deafened, angered and frightened. But one felt the tremendous sincerity and enthusiasm that had brought it into being, and looked forward to the sure understanding that familiarity would bring—and then it was withdrawn. The question whether it was a splendid masterpiece or an ambitious failure is in a fair way to being answered in the immediate future, though the new version will probably be very different from the old. But the music remains unchanged, and we shall know whether seven years' experience of Stravinsky and the Modernists will have taught us to appreciate what was then, for most of us, but elemental, formless sound.

The "Sacre du Printemps" is the culminating point in Nijinsky's meteoric career. To have invented three such ballets within eighteen months is an astonishing performance for a boy of twenty-three. The resolute way in which he threw aside the whole armament of technique with which he had been equipped at the Imperial School, shows how urgent was his conviction that nothing further could be achieved by the pursuit

of mere technical dexterity or by endless rearrangements of the old dancing motives.

The breath of life was no longer to be found within the walls of that pleasant garden in which tradition had confined them. To stay there was to doom the ballet to artistic sterility, and he judged it wisest to break abruptly through the fence and fight his way into the wider spaces that lay beyond.

Whether the path he chose was the right one or not, the fact remains that it proved too difficult for a public that hated after-dinner thinking, and unmistakably preferred the sheltered safety of the familiar garden. So Nijinsky's third ballet was also his last, and the less ambitious Fokine was recalled to office.

Other dancers may have equalled and even surpassed him in purely technical accomplishment. But in him there was added so perfect a grace, so swift and effortless an ease of movement, that one felt that where they had acquired their art through long discipline, he could never have needed to be taught. To others has been given the power of perfect movement over the ground, but to him alone the supreme gift of mastery of the air.

Nijinsky's subsequent history after these crowded days of success is sad enough. A few months after his marriage in South America, in the autumn of 1913, he severed his connection with Diaghilev and collected a company of his own. With them he appeared in London in the spring of 1914, and a short, unhappy season was brought to a sudden end by his illness. The outbreak of war found him in Hungary, where he was interned till

the end of 1916. After his release he rejoined the Diaghilev company and danced with them, the ghost of his old pre-eminent self, for a little while in 1917. Then his health finally gave way, and the greatest dancer in the world passed from sight for ever.

XII

MASSINE

WITH the defection of Nijinsky in 1913 and the return of Fokine to Russia on the outbreak of war, Diaghilev found himself left without a maître-de-ballet. His choice might have been expected to fall on Adolf Bolm, a good dancer and excellent actor, who had been continuously with the company since 1909 and who had already produced the Persian ballet in "Khovantchina." But with Diaghilev it is always the unexpected that is most likely to happen, and when they returned to Europe in 1915, Leonide Massine, a boy of eighteen, the Joseph of the preceding year, was already filling the responsible post, with the "Midnight Sun" as his *pièce justificative*.

Beyond the fact that for the first time we heard singing accompanying the dancing there was nothing revolutionary in it; it was clearly in the succession of the Fokine ballets; and considering the age of its inventor it was astonishingly well constructed and effective.

Between 1915 and 1917, Massine began to think out a policy for himself and to study (and proclaim) the faults of his predecessors. Fokine was said to have been too sentimental, too much attached to plots, too linear in movement. Nijinsky, though he had tried to emphasize the plastic and the dynamic sides of dancing, had been all wrong in his ideas as to the

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rhythmic relation of movement and music. It was pointed out how gravely he had erred in the "Sacre du Printemps" when he had made his dancers move with the rhythm instead of against it.

I do not think that these judgments which sounded so ungracious were meant ill-naturedly by the youthful critic, nor were they taken very seriously by his audience. They were somewhat in the nature of election addresses and they were received with the same indulgent scepticism with which experience has taught us to discount the platform criticisms and promises of political candidates. For there were promises too, and they included a whole new system of dancing that would have nothing in common with the classical school, and a fresh set of "elementary positions" that should supersede the traditional five.

At all events it was clear that he took his responsibilities with a high seriousness, and with the sound of those uncompromising words in one's ears, it was a relief to find that in practice he was wise enough to know when to relax his principles, and was happily ready to fall back at the right moments on sentiment, linear movement, or classical dancing, and even to borrow ideas from Jacques Dalcroze, whom he had blamed as the cause of Nijinsky's mistakes in "Le Sacre."

It was hardly fair of Diaghilev to throw this young man-with-a-mission into the company of the three laughing cynics who were the authors of "Parade," the ballet that followed two years later. He was obviously bewildered by his companions, and moved rather heavily in their wake as they strutted and jangled their sophisticated way through those

twenty minutes of witty nonsense. It required someone less serious-minded to invent fitting movement for music that included passages to be played on typewriting machines.

" Parade " once out of the way, Massine came into his own swiftly with the " Contes Russes " and " Les Femmes de Bonne Humeur." The former was produced in Paris in the same season of 1917, and the latter in New York early in 1918. The former is as typically Russian as any of the series ; perhaps we should take it as the swan-song of the Diaghilev Ballet in its purely Russian phase. The latter, even though Bakst had decorated it, comes as the first serious example of the later de-Russianized productions.

We were conscious of a changed atmosphere as we followed the artifice and intrigue of this Venetian comedy and watched the quick impulsive movements and the happy heedlessness of the secure and joyous South. It was a ballet of perpetual movement ; they danced as they sat or walked, they danced through their dinner and while they changed their clothes. It was linear movement purely, and it had the flickering restlessness of the earlier cinematograph. It was a triumph of close-knit, perfectly-timed choregraphy—clearly an advance, but, equally clearly, along the Fokine line.

Then with the " Contes Russes " we were swung back to Russia and the last glittering tribute to the country of their birth—the sum and essence of its unspoilt youth. There was no detail in it of scene or dress that could not be paralleled in Old Russian wall-painting or story-book ; nor was there a pose or movement which is not suggested in the ikons or the early drawings—and yet in its strangeness and its square simplicity it

gave one the impression of audacious modernism. Larionov's share in it was beyond praise, and Massine had made but one serious mistake in it, when he set the Princess dancing a conventional *pas seul* which only partially justified itself by the pleasure that it evoked.

This moment apart, the ballet was brimful of imagination and resourcefulness. The demonic intensity of the witch's gyrations and the ferocity of the stilted Baba Yaga were properly horrifying, and the ikonic naïveté of the Princess's ladies—their fluttering hands and bowed heads while the battle between Prince and Dragon was in progress—their little exultant leaps when victory was assured, attained a quite remarkable level of beauty. Very striking too was the wave movement of the serried onlookers in the scene that followed, and very splendidly exhilarating the rainbow stream of happy dancers that whirled the ballet to its triumphant close.

After that there could be no doubt of Massine's ability to lead the ballet in any new direction that might be decided on. His ideas were apparently so clear-cut, his decision so swift and unfaltering and his command of the company so assured that it seemed certain that, if his health could stand the physical strain of dancing, in addition to the mental strain of inventing the ballets, the history of his captaincy would stand out as the most remarkable chapter in the annals of the company.

And then follows a period when he seems to be drifting, and one wonders why. Did his initial successes seem to him too easily achieved, and was his ambitious mind dissatisfied with the measured pace of progress by evolution? Was it the vertiginous air of Paris and the companionship of the rebel

free-lances that had upset his artistic equilibrium? Or, finally, and as one hopes, was that sequence of half-successes due to the fact that his mind was preoccupied with the proving and perfecting of some new art form, foreshadowed, perhaps, in "Le Rossignol," that he would show us at last complete and compelling? Be the cause what it may, the fact remains that, with all the merits that the newer ballets possess, there is a suggestion about them of a theory not yet worked out to its logical conclusion.

The year 1919 gave us two important ballets. The first, "La Boutique Fantasque," one can pass over quickly for any virtue of choregraphy it possessed. It had its moments of legitimate beauty, the opening and the closing scenes were ingenious in form and in spirit, but the rest, with the signal exception of the *enlèvement* of Lopoukhova, was but mere virtuosity, misdirected for the most part to unworthy ends. Amusing though it was, and impossible though it would have been for any other company to undertake, it remains the only descent from their usual level of high artistic purpose that we can remember.

With "Le Tricorne" the company got back to their proper sphere, and Massine's own performance in it sealed his reputation as a dancer of the first order. He broke entirely new ground and proved himself complete master of it. During his stay in Seville he had set himself to acquire with infinite patience and observation all the nuances of technique and temperament that make Andalusian dancing the despair of those who are not born Spaniards. The dynamic quality that marked his share in the ballet rather overshadowed the rest of it. Madame Karsavina, for all her irresistible grace and

intelligence, was lacking in the *fougue espagnole* that the part demanded. The choral dancing was unconvincing; there was plenty of movement, but it seemed undirected and vague. It is probable that the heterogeneous assortment of colour and outline in their dresses was responsible for some of this apparent lack of definition.

Of the three 1920 ballets, "Pulcinella" wavered between acted comedy and pure ballet. The plot was nebulous and the music a patchwork of old and new, and, as a consequence, the dancing hovered uneasily between the conventional and the significant.

In "L'Astuce Feminine" the ballet section was rightly treated as a *divertissement*, and though all too short it was wholly delightful.

It is only when we get to "Le Rossignol" that we find the Massine ideal emerging consistently and fully. He had given much thought to the questions of space, composition and perspective. He showed us modelled groups that were almost static and living chains of dancers moving in curved intersecting lines. The feeling of weight and solidity was obtained by the use of crouching forms that gave to the groups the lines of rooted trees, a sense that was heightened by the movement of tense arms swinging together like branches in a high wind.

He relied, I think, on the squareness and solidity of the massed dancing as the only possible way of conveying the impression that the little white figure was meant to be a bird—an impression that he emphasized by her quivering staccato movements. He contrived one of the spectacular exits that he arranges so well, when the Emperor moved slowly and imperially

over the forms of his prostrate courtiers, but he robbed Death of all majesty in the final contest when she fled like a shaken rat, vindictive but impotent.

With the single but important reservation that the spirit of this fairy-tale would have been better treated with an altogether lighter hand, we can find no fault with the choregraphy. It was conceived on the broad and logical basis that where an action is to proceed without words, and must therefore make its appeal to the eye alone, it demands the same treatment as a painted picture ; that weight and balance, perspective, modelling and interplay of light on solid forms can be, and should be, as clearly expressible by the use of living beings as with paint on canvas. To accomplish this he postulates that every group must add its plastic value to the whole composition, and every movement mark the passage from one picture to another.

At this point emerges the one practical drawback that we can find to this theory, the one difficulty that remains unsolved. Can we by the light of this just, but somewhat severe, reasoning retain any of the old beloved classical dancing without its seeming trivial and intrusive ? For that is an art that we, of this generation at any rate, with all our crowding memories of past delights, could not easily forego. And yet it does not seem possible that the two schools can co-exist in the same company ; the training for either must monopolize the dancers' whole practice time. From our knowledge of Massine's temperament, while we are sure of his power, we are always a little anxious as to what lengths his enthusiasm may carry him.

Nothing living can stand still, and the Diaghilev ballet is so certainly a living form that we can be sure that its growth will

continue though we cannot foresee in what direction. We look for some compromise between the sterility of the Pavlova ballet, where the fitful beams of one blazing star only betray the artistic void in which she moves, and the cold calculated precision of a scientific ballet that would die of over-intellectuality.

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No record of the ballet would be otherwise than incomplete that did not pay just tribute to two outstanding figures in the company that many seasons have endeared to us; the one, Thamar Karsavina, their chosen herald of 1909, their undisputed queen for ten years; the other, Enrico Cecchetti, the laughing veteran of seventy, the great teacher to whom so much of their technical proficiency is due.

In the case of Madame Karsavina, one is tempted to speak with all the artillery of massed superlatives. But I feel at this stage that they are beginning to wear almost a threadbare look from over-constant repetition. Nevertheless, I would save one word from the wreckage and dedicate it to her—the word incomparable. For there is no one the least like her. The high average of physical beauty and mental alertness that so specially characterizes the rank and file of the company is in her idealized and personified. She has shown herself to us in nearly thirty parts, and in every one of them her personality has shone through, heightening the beauty of such as were beautiful, and redeeming others that would have been banal or worse in other hands.

Her loyalty to Diaghilev has compelled her to take up rôles that must often have been distasteful to her, such as that

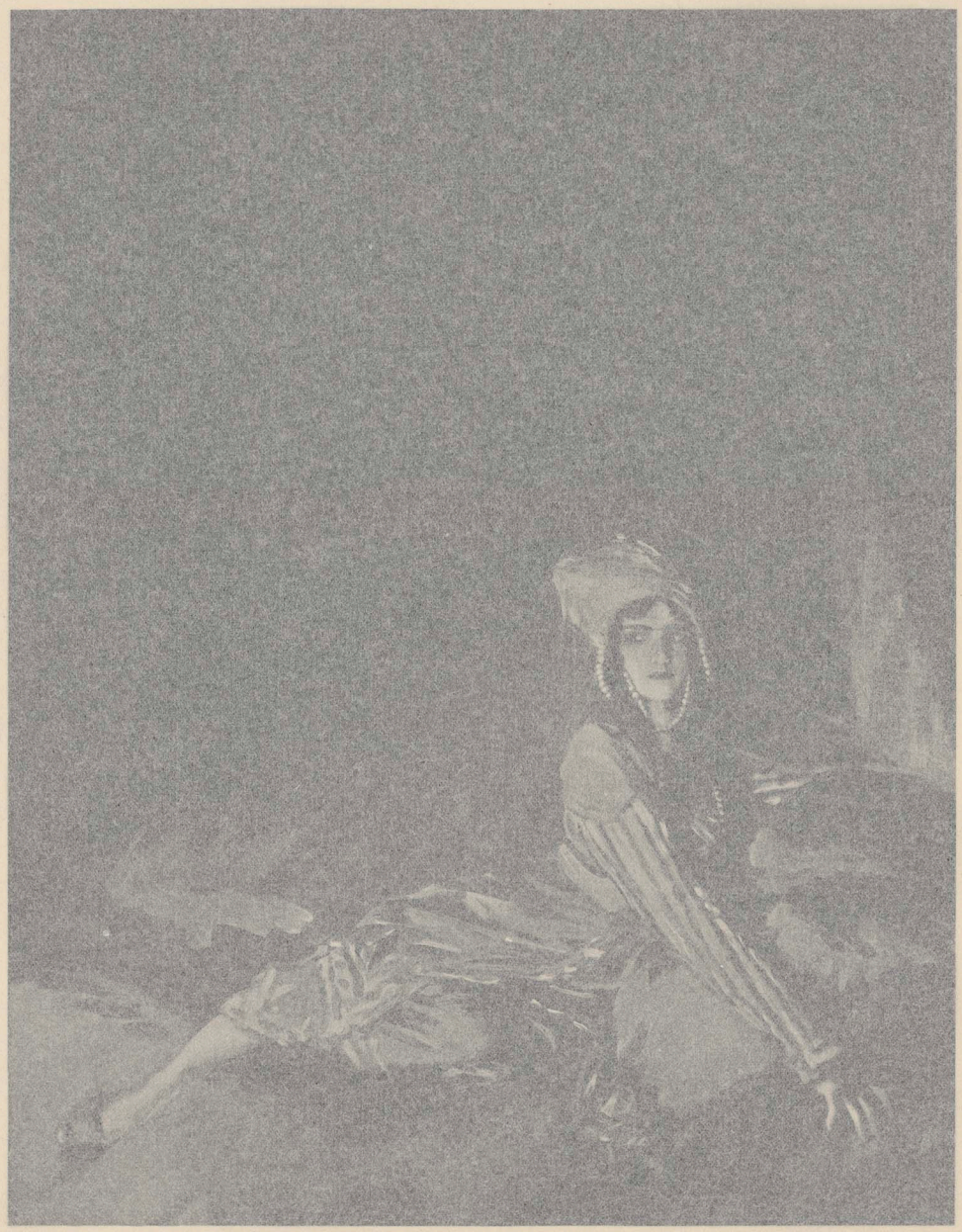
of the American child in "Parade" or the Can-can dancer of "La Boutique Fantasque." But she has never faltered in them, even in that last atrocious pose of the Can-can itself. In many of the greater rôles it is difficult to think of any other but herself playing. In "Scheherazade," "Thamar," and "Le Coq D'Or," in "Sylphides," "L'Oiseau de Feu," or "Petroushka," her parts are finally linked in one's memory with her name.

If she has not the dazzling virtuosity of Anna Pavlova, yet in the subtler restraint of her artistry she displays the same qualities that distinguished Taglioni from the more exuberant Elssler. And, indeed, it is in Taglioni that we find such a striking resemblance to Karsavina, when Théophile Gautier describes her as *légère et pudique* and notes her *abandon décent et voluptueux*.

Whenever she may choose to give up dancing I think she might step into the front rank of actresses, for her eyes have always that hint of tragedy that even comedy demands, and of her high intelligence there is no doubt.

Enrico Cecchetti is one of the indomitable enthusiasts who refuse to grow old. He was dancing in the 'sixties and he can still pirouette with the youngest of his pupils. It is a pure delight to watch him give one of his lessons. Alert and watchful he sits, baguette in hand, beating out the time and whistling the tune to which his pupil dances, and if there be any mistake or misunderstanding he will spring up and go through the figure himself with perfect ease and grace, his face beaming with pleasure at his own undiminished skill.

He has the whole science of classical dancing at his finger-



KARSAVINA AS THAMAR

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tips ; it is the passion of his life, and it is not difficult to guess his opinion of the new choregraphy. He is probably afraid that the new school may kill the old. But it is unlikely that his fears will be realized, for just as it is true that there can be no great dancing without long technical training, so it is certain that there is no form of training to compare in value with that of the school that has created all the famous dancers of the world from La Camargo to Karsavina and Pavlova.

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There remain yet two men, one so far unmentioned, and the other to whom only passing reference has been made, whose influence calls for more detailed consideration.

The first is the painter, Michael Vrubel, who in the days of the Moscow Renaissance towards the end of the last century was the first to direct the attention of the younger painters to the stage as a fitting field for their work. To his advocacy is due the fact that so many of the Russian painters—men like Bakst, Roerich, Golovin and Benois, with fresh eyes and trained hands, and minds unfettered by tradition—flung themselves wholeheartedly into the new movement. Vrubel himself, with his settings for some of the national epics, had raised enormously the prestige of stage painting, and by the time that Diaghilev took the field there was in existence a band of enthusiastic and experienced artists such as no other *entrepreneur* in the world can ever have had the fortune to find.

The other is Marius Petipa, who for the best part of fifty years ruled the Imperial ballet in Petrograd ; a wonderful little man who was born at Marseilles in 1819, and only died in

1910; who danced with Carlotta Grisi in Paris at Rachel's benefit, and who lived to know the triumph of his beloved ballet sixty-five years later in that same city. His ballet, so far as the dancing went, it certainly was; for when he arrived in Russia in 1847 there was little to distinguish the Company of the Marie Theatre from any of the perfunctory official ballets of the subsidized Court Theatres of Europe. Before he retired, in the early years of this century, he had brought into being a Company that for technical excellence, intelligence and loyalty, stood alone and unapproachable in the world.

XIII

THE MUSIC OF THE BALLETS

An Appreciation by Eugene Goossens

IT has been said that perfect beauty disarms criticism, and that the proper attitude before it is one of unquestioning admiration. Eulogy alone is fitting for it—as it is for the great dead. Now the Diaghilev Ballet is neither dead nor is its beauty perfect. It is unmistakably alive, and the beauty of its creations, though very real, is very human and prone to imperfections. It is a fit subject for criticism; it welcomes and thrives on it.

To me has been allotted the pleasant task of reviewing its twelve years' record from a musician's point of view. If I seem to praise or blame unduly, I at least do so in all sincerity.

1.—The Adaptations

In looking down a list of the ballets and operas that the company has presented to the public since its inception in 1908, one is struck by the fact that, musically, the Diaghilev Ballet is almost as International as it is Russian. The repertory, which covers a period in musical history ranging from 1700 to the present day, is representative of the art of practically every musical country in Europe—with the solitary and lamentable exception of our own. English composers are

only just waking up to the full realization of the possibilities of combined sound and movement as exemplified in the performances of these wonderful Russians. With the solitary exception of Arnold Bax (whose music for Barrie's fantasy, "The Truth about the Russian Ballet," showed his grasp of the peculiar idiom of the theatre), none of our younger men have attempted to work in this form. Possibly they are deterred by the apparently small prospect of seeing their work produced. Still, even if Diaghilev should not hasten to produce it, that would be no ground for discouragement. One should never forget that Purcell's "Dido and Æneas," possibly the finest opera ballet ever written by an Englishman, was composed for a girls' school in Chelsea and acted by the young ladies themselves.

The repertory, from a musical standpoint, may be divided into two classes, the commissioned and the adapted ballets, and however much we have admired the good taste and discretion of the adaptations, it is in the ballets of Stravinsky, Falla, Debussy, Ravel, and the rest of the moderns associated with them, that most of our real musical interest is centred. With the modern music we associate the modern technique and the newer theories of *plastique* which have astonished us in the later ballets. In this we are perhaps hardly fair to the adaptations; for, after all, of their number are "L'après midi d'un Faune," in which the Ballet first broke with tradition, and the "Contes Russes," where the new movement is to be seen in almost full development. The Russians have always excelled in the realization of the subtler shades of that emotional psychology which we find in modern music, a quality apart

altogether from the purely technical beauty of movement which appears so consistently in everything that they do, and which immediately raises their performance to a plane far above that attained by any similar organization.

I always think that the individual members of the ballet seem happier when dancing to the music that has been definitely written for them than they were in the earlier of the adapted classics, that had been chosen as a rule because they seemed to lend themselves to the less significant and more conventional forms of dancing then in fashion.

The most important of the adaptations (apart from "Pulcinella," which is more an original work than an adaptation) are Respighi's versions of Cimarosa's "Le Astuzie Femminili" and Rossini's "Boutique Fantasque," Tommasini's arrangement of Scarlatti in "Les Dames de Bonne Humeur," and finally Schumann's "Carnaval" and "Papillons," Chopin's "Sylphides," and Weber's "Spectre de la Rose," the latter group orchestrated, either individually or collectively, by the four Russians—Glazounov, Rimsky-Korsakov, Liadov, and Tcherepnin. The most completely successful of the above were to my mind the ballets for which Respighi and Tommasini were responsible. The work of the adapter, it must be remembered, is by no means an easy one, for, with the unlimited resources of the present-day orchestra, the temptation to overload and over-elaborate the simple piano scores of such masters as Cimarosa, Scarlatti and Pergolesi must have often proved almost irresistible. One can give no higher praise to a modern adapter for the quality and skill of his arrangement than the expression of one's certainty that if the composer could return to earth

and hear his work in its new form, he could hardly fail to approve wholeheartedly and enthusiastically of the transformation to which it had been subjected. Tommasini's "Good-Humoured Ladies" is remarkable for the manner in which the atmosphere of the eighteenth century and the archaic spirit of Scarlatti's music has been conveyed orchestrally with a minimum of resource and a maximum of effect. Its clarity, its wonderful "quality" of colour, and the general atmosphere of good taste which it displays, make this particular example a model of erudite adaptation. So, too, with the work of Respighi, though we find "Boutique Fantasque" not quite so deftly effective, principally by reason of the fuller instrumentation employed; what it gains in volume it seems to lose in transparency. The arrangement of "Astuzie," however, is an unalloyed joy, and the old opera in its new form deserved more success than it actually achieved either here or in Paris. In Rome, on the other hand, it has been the mainstay of a whole season. Old music, like old china, calls for the utmost care in its handling, and it is a proof of the versatility and musicianship of both these young composers, who have already done so much for the musical renaissance of modern Italy, that they should have so successfully grappled with a task which very few of us would dare to face with similar confidence and equanimity.

The adaptations made by the Russians are no less successful. But their task was easier in that the music they were dealing with was so much later in date. Here, quite rightly, all the resources of the modern orchestra have been requisitioned and used with the consummate dexterity that we should expect in

such men, so that the romantic productions of Schumann, Chopin and Weber have acquired a dazzling brilliance of colour which would undoubtedly astonish and intrigue those great masters of pianoforte-writing could they but hear them now. And though, as I have said, the æsthetic value of this latter group pales before the commissioned works of the moderns, undoubtedly these arrangements have served to enhance the usefulness of a series of pieces which hitherto had remained the sole property of the concert-room. "Sylphides" is far the most successful of them; "Carnaval," in spite of its popularity, always seems to me unduly long, from a stage point of view. With the exception of a decided heaviness in certain sections of "Sylphides," the orchestration of all these four ballets is admirable, and the taste of the adapters unimpeachable. The indignant protests which one had constantly heard before these adapted classics were produced, died away instantly in the presence of the new beauty they had acquired.

The comparative lack of success which attended the performances, both in Paris and London, of Stravinsky's arrangement of Pergolesi's "Pulcinella" is yet another example illustrating the unreliability of the public taste. Being present at its production in both cities, I, in common with many others, was astonished at the failure of the slow-witted general public to appreciate the resourceful reverence of Stravinsky's re-dressing of the beautiful Pergolesi music. The hostile camp contained both those for whom any rearrangement of a classic constitutes an unpardonable sacrilege and to whom the very word "modernizing" is anathema, and those who found in "Pulcinella" a work which outraged every canon of good

taste by reason of its composer's alleged disregard of traditional harmony. I cannot understand how the latter could have been so blind to the wonderful homogeneity of technique and the comprehension of old forms and procedure displayed in every page of this masterly score. As to the morality of such adaptations, assuming that the adapter is conversant with the idiom of his model, there is no valid reason to prevent his attempting it, if he thinks he can do it well enough. In this case the result entirely justified the attempt, for to my mind Stravinsky has handled and enlarged upon his material in such a way that the new "Pulcinella" fascinates us, both in the originality of its rhythmic and harmonic treatment and in its faithful reflection of, and adherence to, the spirit of the period in which it was first written. One can only add that it is often difficult to detect where Pergolesi ends and Stravinsky begins, so cleverly interwoven are the strands of the two apparently irreconcilable idioms. A study of the piano score will quickly demonstrate, even to the most sceptical, the daring and intense beauty of "Pulcinella," the pioneer, I am convinced, of many similar adaptations yet to come.

I often wonder what would be the verdict of Pergolesi himself on the methods of his transcriber. Personally I imagine they would leave him somewhat dazed. The technique and procedure of music-making have progressed to such a degree during the last century and a half that one could hardly expect him at first hearing to understand some of Stravinsky's more characteristic embroideries. I am convinced, however, that he could not fail to appreciate the tact with which his music has been handled; the translations of his simple themes into

the richer language of Stravinsky have been accomplished with such subtlety that the master would probably be filled with admiration of the elaborate result, even though it be only really his own so far as the bare melodic line is concerned. As M. de Sales says, "The whole work is a study in veneration and discretion . . . we cannot help being grateful to Stravinsky for having so skilfully thrown into relief the beauties of the old master by underlining them."

2. Stravinsky

Having dealt with the last, but by no means the least, of the specially "arranged" ballets produced by Diaghilev, we pass to a consideration of the personality and work of the transcriber of "Pulcinella," the composer whose music has to such a great extent influenced the artistic policy and fortunes of the Russians. Igor Stravinsky is still a comparatively young man, but from the day, ten years ago, when he appeared with such startling suddenness, he has been the most discussed musician of his time. Acclaimed as a genius, and denounced as an anarchist, he has always been recognized as a power to be seriously reckoned with. So far as this country is concerned, no modern music has reacted as strongly on current schools of thought as the four ballets which Stravinsky has given to the world through the admirable medium of the Diaghilev Ballet, "L'Oiseau de Feu," "Petroushka," "Le Sacre du Printemps" and "Le Rossignol."

The influence of Stravinsky on contemporary music has made itself felt all over the world. Certainly no composer of our time has been the subject of so much theorizing and

such acrimonious discussion. But enough has been written about his music to convince even the most casual observer of its enormous significance, and even his opponents admit that the work he has already given us may be the source of important developments in the nearer future. Leigh Henry, in his chapter on Stravinsky, admirably summarizes the spirit of the composer's idiom in the following words :—

"He presents us with an art not merely distinguished by an extraordinary technical development and an unprecedented richness of texture, but also a living expression of a spirit essentially pagan, but yet so informed by modern sensitiveness that it reaches far beyond the elemental and obviously physical feelings which constitute the common acceptance of paganism, to moods which, while plainly of tangible origin, are of extraordinary rarity, poignancy, and subtlety. His music approaches, perhaps, nearer to the conciseness and intensity of Chinese poetry than anything else, by reason of its intimacy and subtlety of expression, its vivid and direct delineation of imagery, its fine demonstration of the indissoluble association of all vital feeling with concrete actuality. Yet it has no archaism, no retrospective or sentimental romanticism. One is always aware of a highly developed modern psychology beneath his music, a natural expansion of human sensatory and mental capacity which has nothing to do with the tedious learning of scholastic culture, but which constitutes a new type of sensitive development produced by the new elements and group-force combinations creating the aspects and characteristics of to-day."

With regard to the general structural form of his work, the composer's own words amply define his purpose. He says—

"I want neither to suggest situations or emotions, but

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simply to manifest, to express them. I think there is in what are called "impressionist" methods a certain amount of hypocrisy, or at least a tendency to vagueness or ambiguity. That I shun above all things, and that perhaps is the reason why my methods differ as much from those of the impressionists as they differ from academic conventional methods. Though I find it extremely hard to do, I always aim at straightforward expression in its simplest form. I have no use for working-out in dramatic or lyric music. The one essential is to feel and to convey one's feelings . . ."

In fine, the three things he aims at are, firstly, a forcible directness of statement; secondly, a rigid economy of means; and thirdly, an intense sincerity of feeling.

In such masters of choregraphy as Fokine, Nijinsky and Massine, we see a reflection of the spirit which informs Stravinsky, and to them the rhythmic and tonal qualities of his four ballets made instant appeal. Small wonder, then, that artistic unity was the keynote, both before and behind the curtain, of all these productions, and that in such masterpieces as "Petroushka" and the "Sacre du Printemps," the Russians found the ideal channel for the full display of their natural gifts of interpretation.

The first of Stravinsky's ballets was the "Firebird" of 1910. It is the only one of his works in which one can clearly trace his artistic pedigree and recognize the different influences which have gone to build up his own very personal idiom.

One might say that the spirit of Borodin haunts the Prelude and the Berceuse, that the Paul Dukas of "L'Apprenti Sorcier"

is to be felt whenever there is magic in the air, and that the Finale contains much of Rimsky-Korsakov. And yet the whole work is full of himself, and even when the forms of the older men loom up, it is Stravinsky who has deliberately brought them there, and it is his brain, and his alone, that has given shape to the ideas that they have suggested to him. If Rimsky-Korsakov, for example, might have opened the final movement, it was only Stravinsky that could have worked out the triumphant end on the great chords of consecutive notes.

The first night of it was one of those exhilarating occasions when one was conscious that a new planet had swung into the musical firmament. It was the first of the commissioned ballets that we had heard, and it leapt instantly to its rightful place, far ahead of the best of the adaptations.

The beauty of its structure made its subsequent arrangement as an orchestral suite inevitable, and its popularity in this form atones in some measure for the comparatively few opportunities we have of witnessing it on the stage in its entirety.

Within a year of the production of his first ballet, Stravinsky had finished his second, and with the appearance of "Petroushka" he achieved a wide, secure popularity: surprisingly enough, when we remember that the score was possibly the most difficult and law-breaking that had ever been written. "L'Oiseau de Feu" paled its revolutionary fires and assumed an air of classical correctness by the side of this Mænadic thing of crashing discords and tangled harmonies.

The reason for its popular success was not really so far to seek, for, leaving aside the attractiveness of the story, the colour, and the dancing, there was in the music itself so universal an

appeal that it swept the audience off its critical feet and left them unreasoningly happy. The simpler souls rejoiced in the fun of it and the bright patches of easy melody; we others, worshippers of the "Firebird," were bewitched by the composer's superb handling of the orchestra and by his seeming power of extracting new sounds from his instruments and bending the notes to serve his will.

Throughout he used the music to reflect the psychology of the story. He would pick up some common tune and let it blare out naked and unashamed, and then wrap it up in elaborate disguise through which we could catch the echo of its mocking laughter. One remembers how the orchestra fell silent when the puppets first broke through the crowd, and only the piano was left to represent their mechanical ecstasy; and later, how a bear came grunting over the stage, and the ugly sound became the burden of the tragedy close ahead.

Where there is melody it is the melody of the streets, the banality of the cornet, the whistle, and the barrel-organ. But over all one feels the air surcharged with something unusual, disconcerting, and there is the sense of the supernatural obtruding through the heedless bustle of the workaday world.

At first it seems a tumbled sea of sound, but as we watch it we see in every curve of every wave the master hand that has ordained its inevitable form.

As a work of art it is faultless alike in its musical and dramatic construction, and to me it remains almost the greatest of the Diaghilev ballets. There are few music-lovers to whom "Petroushka" is unfamiliar, and there are few ballets which rival it in sheer intensity.

Passing, for the moment, the "Sacre du Printemps," we will here consider the vexed question of the two "Nightingales," the opera of 1914 and the ballet of 1920. It is difficult to assign the reason for the experiment that Stravinsky thought fit to make when he prepared the second version of the music of this delightful opera for the purposes of pure ballet. I suspect that the success of the Diaghilev version of the "Coq D'Or" inspired him to go a step further and try whether the singers, having been pushed as far as the wings, could not be got off the stage altogether; and not only off the stage but out of the theatre. With them had to go the Fisherman, as he at least could not be expected to dance, and with him gone the whole first act was empty, and there was an end of that.

Whatever the reason for it, the revision was decided on, and it only remains for us to judge the result as dispassionately as we can. We could ill spare that first act, for apart from its own inherent beauty, it had the added interest for us that it was written four years before the other acts; so that the opera, in its entirety, enabled us to watch the changing ideals of the composer as he progresses from the "Oiseau de Feu" along the path of ever-increasing polyphonic complexity. The new version plunges us straight into the turbulence of the second act, which, in spite of a short reference to the tranquil Fisherman's Song, with the trumpet doing duty for the tenor, does not seem nearly so effective when robbed of its preceding context. Though the scoring in the ballet version, for considerably reduced orchestra, is a striking example of the rich effects obtainable by economy of orchestral means, none the

less the absence of the voices, and in particular the wonderful coloratura part of the Nightingale, robs the work of much of its former brilliant and sonorous effect. Whether the addition of Massine's choregraphy in any way compensates us for the loss of a whole act and all the singing is a matter I would rather not decide, though to me it seemed the one ballet of the repertory in which I found the movements of the dancers frankly distracting, though their contortions possibly possessed some deep significance. From a stage point of view, the new setting and décor certainly seemed to add a general impressiveness and grandeur which the old version, with its three rather disjointed stage pictures, somehow lacked; but apart from this, I prefer the opera version to the subsequent rearrangement. The one fault of the opera lies in the fact that the three acts in themselves are so short that, owing to the inevitable waits for a change of scenery, the piece tends rather to lack continuity. A revolving stage would solve the problem, but unfortunately in few, if indeed in any, opera-houses is such a luxury yet available.

"Le Rossignol" has often been adversely criticized as being disconnected and fragmentary. We may allow some measure of justice to the criticism in so far as the story is concerned. Three short episodes, each demanding an act and scenery to itself, can never make a satisfactory libretto for an opera, and such a subject is even more unfitted for a ballet, where continuity of action is more rigorously demanded. But when the criticism is extended to the music, I think we may fairly complain that it is based on a misconception; for the difference of style that is clearly noticeable between the

first and the succeeding acts is simply due to the four years' interval that elapsed between the composition of the earlier and the later parts of the score.

But diversity of date does not imply diversity of aim, and I regard the technique of the second and third acts as the purely logical development of the technique of the first. As a result of the revision of 1920 we have a closer-knit and more summarized work, but, for me, the gain is outweighed by the excision of the first act.

With all its faults, the opera as we first knew it was a lovely thing, from the brooding Prelude to the last triumphant Song of the Victorious Nightingale, and as we listened to it we were conscious of an ever-changing pageant of orchestral and vocal sound that in turn delighted, astonished, and even awed us.

The growth of Stravinsky's fame was, as we have said, very rapid. In June 1912 he is unknown—"a young Russian composer, brought up under the influence of Rimsky-Korsakov and Borodin, who has migrated to Paris and assimilated the spirit of Debussy, Dukas and Ravel." The "Times" critic, from whose notes on "L'Oiseau de Feu" we quote, finds his music confused, but allows that some of the fragrance of the Steppes has survived in it.

By July of 1913 he has risen to the dignity of the full column, his importance having been recognized through "Petroushka," that had been played in February, and "Le Sacre du Printemps" which had just appeared; and the long critique of the first night is followed in a few days by a still longer article, specially devoted to him, that is full of shrewd observation and learned deduction. From these articles and

certain correspondence that follows them, it is obvious that he is being taken seriously, even if he is not as yet fully understood.

The "Sacre du Printemps" was, of course, too difficult for most people to accept, and when we remember that, in addition to what must have seemed the outrageous idiom of the score, there was the enigmatic choregraphy of Nijinsky to distract them further, it is small wonder that its reception was guarded, to say the least of it.

A further quotation from the "Times" will give us an idea of some of the music the audience had to face, and we can then understand their doubts, and even their hostility, as it fell on their unaccustomed ears.

"The music is unlike anything that has been given us, either by the Russians or by anyone else, although we can trace its origin in much that Stravinsky has written in 'Petroushka.' Harmonically, it is extraordinarily rough and strident; in one place a theme fully harmonized in D minor grates uncompromisingly on a counter subject in D major, over an accompaniment played *fortissimo* in A major, on the top of chords of C major with an augmented fourth: in another, chords of the dominant Seventh in the key of A flat are hurled against full chords of E major, while another subject is given out, *marcato e sempre m.f.*, in E flat major."

When a critic says that as long as the 12-note scale is in general use the simultaneous employment of keys a semitone apart is not likely to become acceptable, the prophecy sounds safe, but it is one that is already on the way to being disproved.

If the music was "rough and strident," it was all the more suitable for a community whose god resembled Pan rather than

the Apollo Belvedere. It is the elemental emotions of a fierce Nature-worship that Stravinsky has striven to represent, with every legitimate resource of tonal and plastic art, and every possibility of rhythmic and harmonic device. If the ultimate effect on his hearers is but that of formless and incoherent sound, he must be judged to have failed. But if, as I think, the music, when we get to know it well, reveals in bar after bar a mind moving with inexorable logic and sustained inspiration, then we must acclaim the "Sacre du Printemps" a masterpiece without a rival.

On the Continent it ranks as a great landmark in musical history, and it has become as widely known outside as inside the theatre. Here seven years had to pass before we were given a single concert performance of it. The old idea that ballet music should never be played outside the theatre can no longer be tolerated. I would venture to say that in no single instance has Diaghilev produced a ballet whose score did not entitle it to be listened to as pure music.

In the case of "Le Sacre" the necessity for concert performance was doubly urgent; not only because the score is one of the most wonderful ever written, but also because the absorbing interest of the dancing prevented the constant attention to the music that its difficulty demanded.

To the writer, "Le Sacre" stands out as the monumental achievement of Stravinsky's genius. True it is that since the date of its completion, the composer has advanced still further along the paths of research and daring innovation. The fruits of his labours are available in the series of shorter works published in the last two or three years, among which

" L'Histoire du Soldat " and the Symphony for wind instruments seem to me the most interesting. They have been severely criticized as lacking the conceptional greatness that marks his ballets. They have been dismissed as trivial experiments or condemned as arrogant and insane cacophony. History tells us that every composer from Beethoven onwards who has chosen to employ a new musical idiom or dared to break the rules made by his predecessors has in his turn been viewed with suspicion and disapproval. The wise man, equally undazzled and unprejudiced by the audacity of it, will reserve judgment till he has given his ear time to get used to the unaccustomed combinations of sound. I am convinced that Stravinsky's latest work is not only extraordinarily interesting in itself, but that it contains the germs of a still newer method of expression which will eventually force upon us an entire re-valuation of the accepted principles of harmony.

3. Other Russian Composers

Besides Stravinsky, practically all the great writers of the Russian school are represented in Diaghilev's repertory, and their music has served, as no other could, for the display of the essentially racial characteristics of the company. Glinka, Moussorgsky, Balakirev, Tchaikovsky, Rimsky-Korsakov, Arensky, Borodin, Liadov, Tcherepnin and Steinberg are names which cover the whole field of Russian musical history from the early nineteenth century to the present day, and it is unnecessary to include in this review a consideration of such well-known works as those for which the first-named four were responsible.

Among them may be briefly mentioned Glinka's "Russlan and Ludmila" (performed in Paris only), Moussorgsky's "Boris Godounov" and "Khovantchina" (the former inseparably connected with the name of Chaliapin, the creator of the title-rôle, and the latter remarkable for its choruses and the wonderful décor and dancing of the Persian scene), the popular "Thamar" of Balakirev, and, finally, the evergreen "Lac des Cygnes" of Tchaikovsky.

Under the Diaghilev regime, Rimsky-Korsakov has certainly divided the lion's share with Stravinsky, for, apart from that most spectacularly popular of all ballets, "Scheherazade," the delightful "Soleil de Nuit" from "Snegourotchka," and the disappointing "Sadko," no less than three of his operas were produced—"Ivan le Terrible," "Nuit de Mai," and "Coq D'Or"—the last being performed, in spite of the composer's wishes, as an opera-ballet. Having an intimate acquaintance with the work in both guises, I venture to submit, with all deference to the composer's intentions, that the Diaghilev version (with its unforgettable quaintness of setting) is far more suited to the nature of both music and text than is the original operatic version, recently performed by the Beecham Opera Company in this country. Both music and text seemed to tell more effectively as delivered by principals and chorus at the sides of the stage, whilst the characterization of the principal rôles, as enacted by the dancers themselves, gained incomparably in subtlety and dramatic effect. In either form, however, the opera ranks among the world's masterpieces both for the delicate and ironic fantasy of its story and for the exceeding beauty of its music. Most wonderful thing of all,

it only lasts just over two hours, a point that enhances the crime that both Diaghilev and Beecham committed in cutting it so furiously.

Arensky's "Cléopâtre" is music in which I can find nothing either to praise or to condemn. The great ballet from Borodin's "Prince Igor" is a thing apart; no dance-music ever written can match it for that intolerable throbbing rhythm that can "set men madly leaping in the air, and leave their women swooning with desire." The opera as a whole shows the influence that the typical Russian folk-song had on the music of such a master as Borodin; that peculiar tinge of modal sadness which pervades everything he wrote, operatic or otherwise, is here exceptionally prominent.

Liadov's "Children's Tales," consisting of a suite of this composer's best-known works (of which "Baba-Yaga," a fascinating and brilliantly conceived *scherzo*, is the most popular), is a fortunate example of how, by care and good taste, a number of pieces may be strung together and yet produce an effect of coherence and consistency. The tact of the arranger has saved this ballet from the reproach of scrappiness, a fault which so often mars the balance of any series of pieces converted to the uses of the stage. The music, including a Prelude orchestrated by Bax, strikes the note of folk-lore and fanciful imaginativeness from the outset, and the stage action and decoration combine to make "Children's Tales" as delightfully original and modern a fantasy as any of the others. Steinberg and Tcherepnin, both one-time conductors of the organization, complete the list of Russian composers, the first with his admirable "Midas," and the

second with the no less interesting but rather less modern ballets "Narcisse" and "Pavillon d'Armide."

From the foregoing pages it will be seen to what an extent Diaghilev is indebted to the fertile genius of his wonderful countrymen; they have indeed created a standard by which all other ballets must henceforward be measured. One cannot question the vitality of a school which has produced and which continues to produce such men as these.

4.—Strauss. The French Composers and de Falla

It is interesting to notice how all Western arts, and in particular the art of music, have at one period or another come under the sway of Russian influences in varying degrees. In fact, one might almost assert that Western Europe, with the exception of Germany and Austria, has, during the last thirty years, unconsciously, but none the less effectively, derived the greater part of its present-day creative impulse from the musical activities of men such as Balakirev, Moussorgsky and Rimsky-Korsakov. Particularly does this apply to the Latin countries, whose idiomatic affinity with their Eastern neighbours was largely a result of the overwhelming reaction against the despotism of the ponderous German Romantics. The French temperament had little in common with the heavy romanticism of its next-door neighbour, while the Russian methods of tone-painting and the sensitive colour of their music appealed irresistibly to them. And though (with the exception of a periodical crop of Stravinsky imitators) Russian influence is less obvious in the latest production of the French, Italian and

Spanish writers, it is undeniable that their present impressionism is ultimately derived from their study of Russian music.

The Germans alone remained impervious to these influences. It is hardly to be wondered at, therefore, that only one of their composers figures in M. Diaghilev's repertory—the famous Richard Strauss, with his unworthy product "The Legend of Joseph." Strauss is a great composer—his symphonic poems, and at least three of his operas, are witness to his power, but certainly "Joseph" does not enhance his reputation. It is decadent both in origin and result—at least so it seemed to me, though, on second thoughts, I believe it was too dull to be even decadent. It was the old spectacle of a commissioned work devoid of inspiration; it was ostentatious and empty, and but confirmed one's impression that Strauss had said his last word with the "Rosenkavalier." The music of "Joseph" presents great patches of arid waste, uninspired tracts of laboured ineffectiveness, camouflaged with a consummate dexterity of orchestration which seems almost to accentuate its futility. The ballet was a disappointment to all who anticipated a new manifestation of the genius of a composer still presumably at the height of his creative period; and whilst not without a certain spectacular interest, it quite failed to repay its producers for the great time and trouble they had expended on it.

All the remaining ballets are, with one exception (of which Spain may be justly proud), the work of the modern French school, and a list that includes the names of Debussy, Ravel, Schmitt and Satie is fully representative of its differing types.

It is when they attack the music of the French school that we get proof of the extraordinary adaptability of their Russian

interpreters. The atmospheric impressionism of the Frenchmen provided the supreme test of the imaginative qualities of the Diaghilev company, and their rendering of "Daphnis," to quote only one instance, proved how quickly and completely they could grasp a new musical idiom. We see the vehement outspokenness of "Scheherazade" and "Petroushka" replaced by methods more fitting to the spirit of the French musicians, who still, even in their moments of emotional climax, preserve their eloquent reticence and polished restraint.

We confess at once that we would that the share of the French writers had been greater. What, after all, are the adapted "Après-Midi," and the unsuccessful "Jeux" from the composer of "Pelléas" and the immortal "Nocturnes"? The former certainly gave us Nijinsky's superb delineation of the Faun, while the movement and the colour made visible to us the spirit of Debussy's masterpiece, and enhanced the constant beauty of its score; but "Jeux," chiefly for what I consider the uninspired and completely inappropriate stage action, could never be termed successful, though the music, of course, contained moments of intense beauty. Yet the Master, had he lived, would surely have realized the inadequacy of his contribution to the literature of the ballet, and following in the steps of Ravel and other Frenchmen, would have given us a work thoroughly worthy of his genius. An unperformed ballet entitled "Khamma" (dedicated to an English dancer who has never danced it) was published in 1913, but both this and "Jeux" belong more to the realm of the symphonic poem than to the ballet as we know it. Certain it is that, apart from Opera, Debussy never displayed

great enthusiasm for the stage, and it seems probable that few further essays would have been forthcoming from his pen even if death had not deprived the world of one of its greatest musicians.

The case of Ravel is far different—he is responsible for at least one of the greatest dance-poems ever staged. "Daphnis and Chloe" epitomized the modern French school in its every aspect; such a subtle web of instrumental complexity has surely never before been woven. The spell of its music holds us enthralled from beginning to end, so enchanting are its melodic and harmonic cadences. Words can give but a faint idea of the colour and fragrance of the pastoral music, of the wild uncouthness of the Pirates' Dance, or the cumulative intensity of the final scene. It is always to be regretted that the performance in 1914 in London was marred by the omission of all the choral singing. As well imagine "Le Martyre de St. Sebastien" shorn of its music, or the finale of the Ninth Symphony without the chorus. I have never understood how Diaghilev came to sanction such a mutilation of the score; possibly at that time a chorus seemed too daring an innovation. But now that singing tends to play an increasing part in the newer ballets, we shall probably find the great chorus restored to its rightful place in the promised revival of this ill-treated, neglected, but wholly delightful ballet. Pending this, let us hope that some day our concert conductors will condescend to play it for us as it was written, complete with its choral accessories, instead of tantalizing us with occasional odd fragments arbitrarily cut from it.

The neglect of this and other important stage works in their concert form illustrates the helplessness of the serious student in face of the stolid loyalty to old favourites that marks the average concert-goer. The control of our Concert Halls by the great music-publishing firms has distinctly not been to the advantage of the lovers of more advanced music. The makers of programmes lack courage, and few things are admitted if there is any doubt as to their "drawing" powers. Certain adventurous enthusiasts, like the Beecham of early days, Balfour Gardiner or Adrian Boult, have, from time to time, and at enormous expense, organized concerts in order that the neglected masterpieces of modern music might be heard. They have only too constantly been rewarded by having to play to long rows of empty seats. So long as our concert policy is reactionary and follows public taste instead of leading it, so long also will the concert versions of "Le Sacre," "Daphnis," "Salome," and others remain unperformed.

It is safe to predict for "Daphnis and Chloe," however, a future worthy of its greatness. Apart from its mere beauty the score is of extreme value to students of music, in the perfect balance of its orchestration. Ravel has lavished a world of care and fantasy on its fashioning; the clarity and skill of the scoring are beyond all praise. Dexterity of technique and elaboration of detail are typical features in the work of Ravel's imitators, and only too often the only weapons in their armoury; but here is very real inspiration too, a gift of forcible and concise utterance, the concentration which is the guiding principle of modern musicians. We find many of these qualities, again, in Florent Schmitt's "Salome," one of the

most striking works of the gifted Alsatian composer. Apart from the strength of the thematic material, Schmitt has written throughout on dramatic—but not melodramatic—lines, with a power of reserve and a telling directness that emphasizes the more dramatic nature of the plot, as contrasted with the idyllic quality of Ravel's ballet. "Salome" teems with strong colour. The rather overpowering score is suitably sensuous and exotic, if it is slightly Straussian in places, but it is refreshingly free from the somewhat gross materialism of the German master. Passion here becomes almost sublimated, while losing none of its scorching intensity; the final dance always strikes me as a real *tour-de-force*, both choregraphic and musical. It certainly remains one of the most characteristic works of its composer, belonging as much to the concert-room as to the theatre, yet lacking nothing of the footlights. I did not see the "Le Dieu Bleu," by Reynaldo Hahn, and Satie's "Parade" proved so absorbing on the stage that I should prefer to hear the music again before deciding for myself whether it quite succeeds or not. The "Ragtime" counts among the rare examples of music that is really witty. Satie's satirical humour has before now proved too much for British audiences, and "Parade" was apparently no exception. One likes to picture the composer adding the last convincing touches of pretended triviality to a score of such diabolical cleverness, and then waiting merrily for the wrath of the critics. In the end he certainly got as much abuse as even he could have wanted. Whether it will live or not remains still to be seen, but the Cubist abstraction of an American manager in "Parade" produces an emotion which is at any rate lasting.

Passing over Italy, which produced no original ballets for the Russians, and of which country Malipiero is at present one of the few writing for the stage, we come to Manuel de Falla's admirable "Three Cornered Hat." That the most prominent of the Spaniards would give us an interesting work was only to be expected, but few could have anticipated anything so unquestionably great as it proved to be. Its essentially national flavour, added to its soundness of construction and the profound musicianship displayed in it, have set a hall mark, if any were needed, on Falla's already considerable reputation. Here, as with Ravel and Stravinsky, the idiom is strongly personal, and the whole work glows with the fire and seductive *allure* of its native land. No man understands and expresses better than Falla the musical traditions of his country, and the "Three Cornered Hat" is undoubtedly the most complete embodiment of modern Spanish music existing.

5. The Conductors—The Orchestras—Sir Thomas Beecham

The influence of the Russians on contemporary musical progress is obviously far-reaching. Diaghilev's enterprise has helped to familiarize us with a new phase of artistic endeavour, and has given an impetus to modern musical evolution which has been of incalculable value at a time when such evolution seemed likely to be arrested. We can only conjecture as to its influence on the future of music and the theatre: certainly the enterprise must prove an incentive to all composers—particularly in this country—whose sympathies lie in the direction of plastic and rhythmic expression.

Among the conductors whose services Diaghilev has enlisted at various times, Beecham stands alone by reason of the subtlety of his interpretations; I would rank Ansermet and Monteux together in their erudite and intimate knowledge of the scores (particularly those of Stravinsky), while Émil Cooper's conducting of the operas stamped him as a *chef d'orchestre* worthy to rank with the greatest. Adrian Boult's success showed that we had at least one man in this country as capable in an emergency as any of our foreign *confrères*, whilst, quite apart from the remaining conductors who held the baton at different periods, the work of composers like Strauss, Tcherepnin and Steinberg must not be overlooked.

Perhaps the chief glory of musical England of the present day is the pre-eminence of her orchestras over those that any other country can show; and it is the English visits of the Russians that have been mainly responsible for the revelation of their power. While fully admitting the influence of such conductors as Monteux, Cooper and Ansermet, one must still give unstinted praise to the players, who, under extremely limited conditions of rehearsal, tackled and mastered the complicated and often appallingly difficult scores that were set before them. Among the innumerable benefits that have accrued from these visits, one of the most significant is the general realization on the part of the British public that our orchestras, at least, are incomparable.

In weighing the different factors that have contributed to the success of the Diaghilev enterprise in England, it would be difficult to overstate our indebtedness to Sir Thomas Beecham,

to whose initiative was due the invitation that brought Diaghilev and his company to Covent Garden in 1911, and who, with his father, provided for us those astonishing seasons at Drury Lane in 1913 and 1914.

Indelible is the memory of those summer nights, when from various parts of that uncomfortable old theatre we heard (and on the more fortunate nights even saw) for the first time those stately operas, and argued as to the merits of the newer ballets. But if the memory that first rises is that of Beecham, most discerning and munificent of entrepreneurs, we must not let it overshadow our recollection of Beecham the Conductor, the man of prodigious memory and most sensitive temperament.

So great has been his influence in England in both capacities during the last ten years, that when he relaxes or suspends his efforts musical enterprise droops nerveless and supine.

Two such masterful beings as Beecham and Diaghilev might find it difficult to work together. But were it possible, and it should be possible, who can doubt that London would then take her proud place as the great Court of Appeal for the whole world of music ?

XIV

THE REPERTORY

THE following list of thirty-six Ballets and six Operas includes, I think, everything of any importance that M. de Diaghilev's Company have given between 1909 and 1920. I have omitted two or three short excerpts from old ballets that were given on special occasions, and that did not belong in any sense to the regular repertory. With these exceptions I believe it to be complete.

LE PAVILLON D'ARMIDE

Ballet in three scenes, by ALEXANDRE BENOIS, founded on a tale by THÉOPHILE GAUTIER. Music by TCHEREPNIN. Scenery and Costumes by A. BENOIS. Choregraphy by M. FOKINE.

Paris, 1909 ; Covent Garden, 1911.

PRINCE IGOR

Danses Polovtsiennes from the Opera by A. BORODINE. Adapted and arranged by M. FOKINE. Décors and Costumes designed by M. N. ROERICH. Executed by M. ANISFELD.

Paris, 1909 ; Covent Garden, 1911.

LE FESTIN

Music by RIMSKY-KORSAKOV (March from *Coq d'Or*), TCHAIKOVSKY (Trepak, *L'Oiseau d'Or*, and an Extract from the Second Symphony), MOUSSORGSKY (Hopak), GLINKA and GLAZOUNOV. Décor, C. KOROVIN.

Paris, 1909. Not given in England.

THE RUSSIAN BALLET

LE LAC DES CYGNES

Music by TCHAIKOVSKY. Décor by A. BENOIS. Choregraphy by M. PETIPA.

Paris, 1909; Covent Garden, 1911.

SCHEHERAZADE

Drame Chorégraphique by L. BAKST and M. FOKINE. Music by RIMSKY-KORSAKOV. Scenery and Costumes by L. BAKST. *Panneau Décoratif* by V. SEROV.

Paris, 1910; Covent Garden, 1911.

L'OISEAU DE FEU

Conte Chorégraphique in two scenes, by M. FOKINE. Music by I. STRAVINSKY. Scenery and Costumes by A. GOLOVIN.

Paris, 1910; Covent Garden, 1911.

CARNAVAL

Pantomime-Ballet in one act, by M. FOKINE. Music by SCHUMANN. Orchestrated by RIMSKY-KORSAKOV, GLAZOUNOV, LIADOV and TCHEREPNIN. Choregraphy by M. FOKINE. Scenery and Costumes by L. BAKST.

Paris, 1910; Covent Garden, 1911.

GISELLE

Ballet by THÉOPHILE GAUTIER. Music by A. ADAM. Choregraphy by M. PETIPA. Scenery and Costumes by A. BENOIS.

Paris, 1910; Covent Garden, 1911.

CLÉOPÂTRE

Drame Chorégraphique in one act. Music by A. ARENSKY. Choregraphy by M. FOKINE. Scenery and Costumes by L. BAKST.

Paris, 1910; Covent Garden, 1911.

For the revival in London of 1918 a new scene was painted by R. DELAUNAY.

THE REPERTORY

LES SYLPHIDES

Romantic Reverie in one act, by M. Fokine. Music by Chopin. Orchestrated by Glazounov and Rimsky-Korsakov. Dances composed and arranged by M. Fokine. Scenery and Costumes by A. Benois.

Paris, 1910; Covent Garden, 1911.

SADKO

Tableau Sous-marin, from the Opera by Rimsky-Korsakov. Choreography by M. Fokine. Décor by B. Anisfeld.

Paris, 1911; London, 1918.

For the London revival new dresses were designed by Natalia Gontcharova.

LE SPECTRE DE LA ROSE

Poem by Théophile Gautier, adapted to *L'Invitation à la Valse*, by Weber. Orchestrated by Berlioz. Dances designed by M. Fokine. Scenery and Costumes by L. Bakst.

Paris and London, 1911.

NARCISSE

Ballet Antique in one act, by L. Bakst. Music by Tcherepnin. Choregraphy by M. Fokine. Scenery and Costumes by L. Bakst.

Paris, 1911; Covent Garden, 1912.

PETROUSHKA

Four *Tableaux Chorégraphiques*, by I. Stravinsky and A. Benois. Music by Stravinsky. Choregraphy by M. Fokine. Scenery and Costumes by A. Benois.

Paris, 1911; Covent Garden, 1913.

LE DIEU BLEU

Ballet in one act, by Jean Cocteau and F. Madrazo. Music by Reynaldo Hahn. Choregraphy by M. Fokine. Scenery and Costumes by L. Bakst.

Paris and Covent Garden, 1912.

THE RUSSIAN BALLET

THAMAR

Drama in one act, by L. Bakst, founded on the poem of Lermontov. Music by Balakirev. Choregraphy by M. Fokine. Scenery and Costumes by L. Bakst.

Paris, 1912 ; Covent Garden, 1913.

L'APRÈS-MIDI D'UN FAUNE

Tableau Chorégraphique, by V. Nijinsky, on the Prelude of Claude Debussy. Scenery and Costumes by L. Bakst.

Paris, 1912 ; Covent Garden, 1913.

DAPHNIS ET CHLOÉ

Symphonie Chorégraphique in three parts, by M. Fokine. Music by Maurice Ravel. Scenery and Costumes by L. Bakst.

Paris, 1912 ; Drury Lane, 1914.

LE SACRE DU PRINTEMPS

Poéme Chorégraphique in two acts, by M. N. Roerich. Music by Stravinsky. Choregraphy by V. Nijinsky. Scenery and Costumes by M. N. Roerich.

Paris and Drury Lane, 1913.

JEUX

Scènes Chorégraphiques, by V. Nijinsky. Music by Debussy. Scenery and Costumes by L. Bakst.

Paris and Drury Lane, 1913.

LA TRAGÉDIE DE SALOMÉ

Music by Florent Schmitt. Curtain, Scenery and Costumes by Soudeikine. Choregraphy by Romanov.

Paris and Drury Lane, 1913.

THE REPERTORY

PAPILLONS

Ballet in one act, by M. Fokine. Music by Schumann, orchestrated by Tcherepnin. Scenery by M. Doboujinski. Dresses by L. Bakst.
Paris and Drury Lane, 1914.

LA LÉGENDE DE JOSEPH

Ballet by Hoffmannsthal and Kessler. Music by R. Strauss. Choregraphy by M. Fokine. Scenery by J. M. Sert. Costumes by L. Bakst.
Paris and Drury Lane, 1914.

MIDAS

Music by Maximilien Steinberg. Scenery and Costumes by Doboujinsky. Choregraphy by M. Fokine.
Paris and Drury Lane, 1914.

LE COQ D'OR

Opera-Ballet in three acts, by N. Rimsky-Korsakov. Founded on the poem of Pushkin. Re-arranged from suggestions of A. Benois. Choregraphy and Production by M. Fokine. Scenery and Costumes by Natalia Gontcharova.
Paris and Drury Lane, 1914.

SOLEIL DE NUIT (THE MIDNIGHT SUN)

Russian scenes and dances by L. Massine. Music by Rimsky-Korsakov from the Opera *Snegourotchka*. Scenery and Costumes by M. Larionov.
Paris, 1915; London, 1918.

PARADE

Ballet in one act, by Jean Cocteau. Music by Erik Satie. Choregraphy by L. Massine. Scenery and Costumes after the designs of Pablo Picasso. Curtain specially designed and painted by P. Picasso.
Paris, 1917; London, 1919.

CONTES RUSSES (CHILDREN'S TALES)

People's Play composed by LEONIDE MASSINE. Music by LIADOV. Prelude and Lament orchestrated by ARNOLD BAX. Scenery, Curtains and Costumes by M. LARIONOV.

Paris, 1917; London, 1918.

FEMMES DE BONNE HUMEUR

A Comedy by VINCENZO TOMMASINI. Arranged after CARLO GOLDONI and Music of DOMENICO SCARLATTI. Choregraphy by LEONIDE MASSINE. Scenery and Costumes by L. BAKST.

New York, 1917; London, 1918.

LES JARDINS D'ARANJUEZ

Three Old-Time Dances by LEONIDE MASSINE. Music by FAURÉ, RAVEL and CHABRIER. Prelude by LOUIS AUBERT. Scenery and Costumes by J. M. SERT.

Madrid, 1918. Not given in London.

LA BOUTIQUE FANTASQUE

Ballet in one act. Music by GIACOMO ROSSINI. Arranged and orchestrated by OTTORINO RESPIGHI. Choregraphy by L. MASSINE. Curtain, Scenery and Costumes by ANDRÉ DERAIN.

London, 1919.

LE TRICORNE

Ballet in one act, by MARTINEZ SIERRA. Music by MANUEL DE FALLA. Choregraphy by LEONIDE MASSINE. Curtain, Scenery and Costumes by PABLO PICASSO.

London, 1919.

L'OISEAU ET LE PRINCE

Pas de deux from TCHAIKOVSKY's ballet, *La Belle au Bois Dormant*. Choregraphy by MARIUS PETIPA. Scenery and Costumes by L. BAKST.

London, 1919.

THE REPERTORY

PULCINELLA

Ballet avec Chant in one tableau. Music by STRAVINSKY after GIAMBATTISTA PERGOLESI. Choregraphy by L. MASSINE. Scenery and Costumes by P. PICASSO.

Paris and London, 1920.

LE CHANT DU ROSSIGNOL

Ballet in one act, after the story by HANS ANDERSEN. Arranged by I. STRAVINSKY and L. MASSINE. Music by STRAVINSKY. Choregraphy by MASSINE. Curtain, Scenery and Costumes by HENRI MATISSE.

Paris and London, 1920.

LE ASTUZIE FEMMINILI

Opera-ballet in three Tableaux. Music by DOMENICO CIMAROSA. Recitatives after CIMAROSA. Orchestrated by OTTORINO RESPIGHI. Choregraphy by L. MASSINE. Scenery and Costumes by J. M. SERT.

OPERAS

Boris Godunov, by MOUSSORGSKY. Scenery and Costumes, Paris 1908, A. GOLOVIN. London 1913, K. JUON.

Khovantchina, by MOUSSORGSKY. Scenery and Costumes by FEDOROVSKY. Choregraphy of Persian Ballet by ADOLF BOLM. 1913.

Ivan le Terrible, by RIMSKY-KORSAKOV. Scenery and Costumes by A. GOLOVIN. 1913.

Le Prince Igor, by A. BORODINE. Scenery and Costumes by M. N. ROERICH. 1913.

La Nuit de Mai, by RIMSKY-KORSAKOV. 1914.

Le Rossignol, by IGOR STRAVINSKY. Scenery and Costumes by A. BENOIS. 1914.

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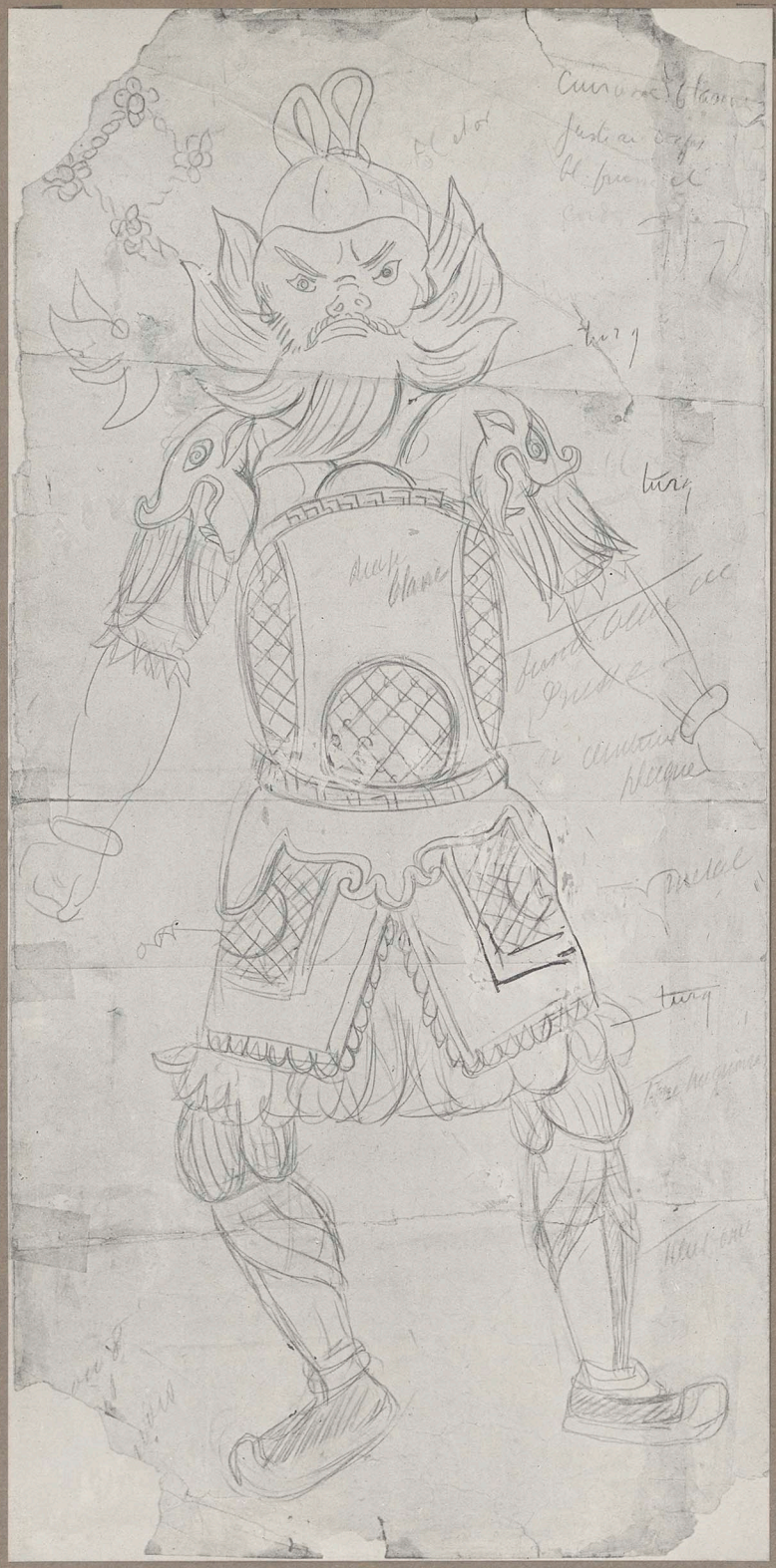

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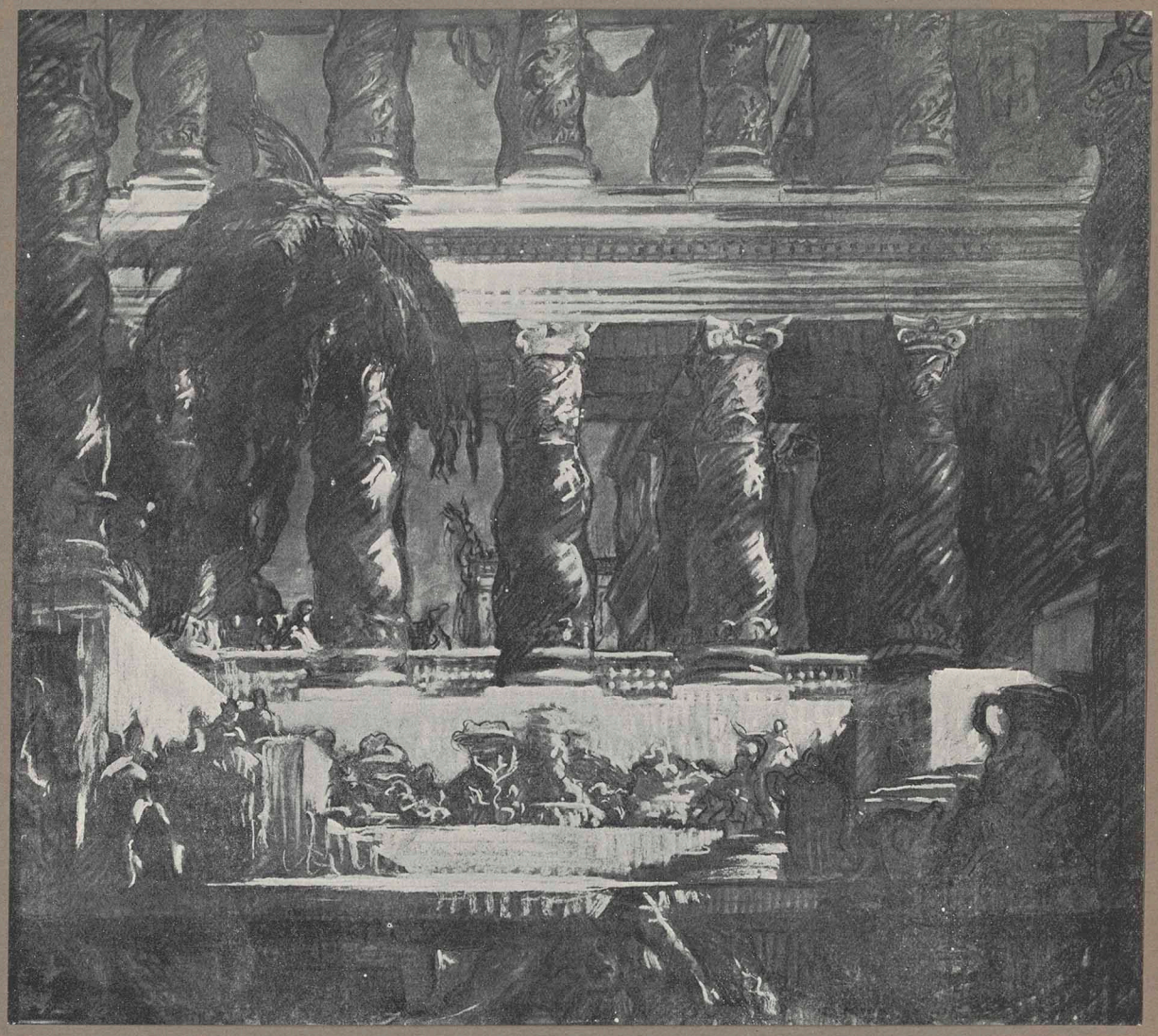

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